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AN ONLOOKER'S NOTE-BOOK

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS'

G. W. E. Russell

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'Another peculiarity of the Russells is, that they never alter their opinions: they are an excellent race, but they must be trepanned before they can be convinced'

SYDNEY SMITH: *Second Letter to Archdeacon Singleton*

M.M. 11-3

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TO

ROBERT, EARL OF CREWE

IN HONOUR OF A FRIENDSHIP

WHICH NOW COVERS MORE THAN

THIRTY YEARS

NOTE.

THIS book is composed of papers which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* during the year 1901. They are reproduced at the request of friends, and by the kind permission of the Editor, Mr. C. P. Scott, M.P.

Easter, 1902.

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EVERY blessing has its drawbacks, and every age its dangers. I wholly reserve my judgment on changes now passing in the world of thought, and of inward conviction. I confine myself to what is nearer the surface; and further, I exclude from view all that regards the structure and operation of political party. So confining myself, I observe that, in the sphere of the State, the business of the last half-century has been in the main a process of setting free the individual man, that he may work out his vocation without wanton hindrance, as his Maker will have him do. If, instead of this, Government is to work out his vocation for him, I for one am not sanguine as to the result. Let us beware of that imitative luxury, which is tempting all of us to ape our betters. Let us remember, that in our best achievements lie hid the seeds of danger; and beware lest the dethronement of Custom, to make place for Right should displace along with it that principle of Reverence which bestows a discipline absolutely invaluable in the formation of character. We have had ploutocrats who were patterns of every virtue, as may well be said in an age which has known Samuel Morley: but let us be jealous of ploutocracy, and of its tendency to infect aristocracy, its elder and nobler sister; and learn, if we can, to hold by, or get back to, some regard for simplicity of life. Let us respect the ancient manners; and recollect that, if the true soul of Chivalry has died among us, with it all that is good in society has died. Let us cherish a sober mind; take for granted that in our best performances there are latent many errors which in their own time will come to light; and thank our present teacher for reminding us in his stately words:—

> Forward, then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,
> Crook, and turn upon itself in many a backward-streaming curve.

W. E. GLADSTONE, 1887.

AN ONLOOKER'S NOTE-BOOK

I

COCKSURENESS AND CONVICTION

Let us cherish a sober mind, and take for granted that in our best performances there are latent many errors which in their own time will come to light.

THIS is my text for to-day. It is taken from Mr. Gladstone's survey of the half-century which closed in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee; and my purpose is to enquire whether the warning which it contains is required by our national temper at the beginning of the twentieth century. Palpably it is an old man's warning. The illustrious Onlooker who uttered it was fully aware that

> The clouds that gather round the setting sun
> Do take a sober colouring from an eye
> That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.

It was his constant endeavour to keep that eye clear and bright. He never willingly suffered its vision to be

obscured either by the glamour of an idealized past, or by the inevitable mistiness of the unknown future. And yet there were certain phenomena in contemporary life and thought on which he looked with increasingly grave misgiving. I purpose, as these chapters proceed, to deal with those phenomena one by one. To-day my text bids me deal rather with a general habit of mind than with a particular instance. And if it is permissible to translate Mr. Gladstone's dignified English into the vulgar tongue, that habit may be called Cocksureness.

Obviously Mr. Gladstone was possessed by the notion that the age which he was addressing had a tendency to be Cocksure; that it was in love with its own opinions, was confident that they were right and all others wrong, and believed that the future would inevitably develope itself on the lines of truths so clearly ascertained. Was this notion well-founded? I look back on the fourteen years which have elapsed since the words were written; I look round me, on society as it exists to-day; and I confess that I discern very few signs of that Cocksureness which Mr. Gladstone regarded as a besetting sin of the expiring century. Surely it was the middle of the century which was the golden age of Cocksureness. In all departments of life and thought the Cocksure seemed to have possessed the earth. They saw what they saw with piercing clear-

'ness, and all who had a wider vision were contemned as mere visionaries. The Cocksure found an excellent opportunity in the confusion and distress of what may be called, in the widest sense, the Traditional School. Old temples were undermined, old idols were trembling on their pedestals, old creeds were undergoing a rather rude revision. The perplexity of those who had relied on the traditional order was absolute; and to them entered the prophets of the new order, logical, clear, consistent, confident, vain-glorious—in a word, Cocksure. Mill and Herbert Spencer, Darwin and Huxley, Bright and Cobden, Macaulay and Froude—these great men, with their innumerable imitators and disciples, dominated our thinking in religion and morals, politics, history, and science. Differing from one another in points neither unimportant nor few, they were at one in this—they were certain that they were right. With them opinion was certitude, and they taught as men having authority, and therefore, Englishmen being docile, with effect. It is true, of course, that solvent forces were already at work. Carlyle and Ruskin, Newman and Maurice, Kingsley and Gladstone, with their splendid inconsistencies, their human sympathies, their spiritual faculty, were permeating the iron age with subtler and more delicate influences. To them it had been revealed that 'Non in dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum Suum.' It is their glory

that they introduced into our religious and political and social thinking a spirit reverent, speculative, self-distrustful, conscious of its own limitations, alive to the

> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized—

in brief, a spirit the opposite of Cocksureness.

It took them fifty years to do their work; but my only doubt is whether they have not done it too completely. To-day no one (worth mentioning) is Cocksure: that is a gain. Scarcely anyone is convinced: that is a loss. To illustrate my contention in the political sphere—which lies nearest to my hand—does anyone believe that the enormous preponderance of power which the electorate gives to one party is the result of a conviction that the preferred party is right? Is it not rather due to an absence of conviction—to a vague feeling that in politics there is no right and no wrong, that both sides are equally futile and untrustworthy, and therefore that the vote may fairly be guided by personal likes or dislikes, dictates of convenience, material advantage, and similar considerations? If the spirit of Cocksureness has disappeared from politics, it is also disappearing from science. Science was formerly its stronghold. Partly because the scientific temper is naturally dogmatic, partly because the knowledge requisite for effective criticism was confined to a very few, men of science habitually

used the language of personal infallibility. Careful observers cannot fail to note a change. All science seems to be reconsidering its position. All the closed books are opened again. The conclusions which satisfied our fathers and our younger selves are sternly questioned. And the phrase which, with reference to theology, was so often on Newman's lips, 'We know so little,' has superseded the formulæ of Cocksureness in the language of scientific speculation. In the sphere of Literature, again, Cocksureness has no place. Standards of taste, rules of art, submissions to established reputation have gone to keep company with Mr. Curdle's celebrated theory of the Dramatic Unities. In days gone by we were quite certain that we liked Shakespeare and Scott and Tennyson and Macaulay, and we rated anyone who disliked them as a booby. Now no one seems quite sure whether he likes a book or not. He sees something to praise in it, but a great deal to criticize. He will not say much for the art, or he cannot quite justify the taste; but it certainly amused him, or he thought bits of it rather pretty. On the whole, he does not want the author to write another, and he is perfectly content that the rest of the world should refuse to join in even this languid admiration. A man who would declare himself an out-and-out lover and disciple of an author would be recognized as a survival of an earlier age; and

anyone who would venture to say, 'This style is good and that is bad,' 'A. can tell a story and B. can't,' 'I like a book with a plot,' or 'I loathe a novel with a purpose' would be set down in 'cultured' circles as presumptuously dogmatic or clownishly insensible to the higher and newer influences of literature.

Political economy was for two generations the chosen domain of the Cocksure. The 'dismal science' professed to be exact, and its exponents laid down its laws and prophesied their results with a solemnity which nothing could disturb. The new century sees Free Trade, once an axiom, degraded to a more or less pious opinion, and finds practical men discussing the merits of bimetallism and seriously debating whether we shall return to a duty on corn.

The subject expands before me, and I must hasten to a close. In no domain of human affairs has the downfall of Cocksureness been more conspicuous than in those of religion and morals; and these two departments I must, for lack of time, consider under one head. Forty years ago theology, whether it was 'High,' 'Low,' or 'Broad,' was eminently Cocksure. If it was High, it relegated its opponents to Uncovenanted Mercies. If it was Low, it knew to a nicety who were converted and who were not. If it was Broad, its equal positiveness in affirmation and denial produced that unattractive temper which Mr. R. H.

Hutton described in his essay on 'The Hard Church.' To-day all schools compete with one another in their eagerness to welcome new light and their unwillingness to say of any proposition 'It is false.' King Leopold of Belgium once said to Bishop Wilberforce, 'The only position for a Church is, "Believe this or you are damned."' The King would find few sympathizers in modern England, where even those who cling most closely to the ancient creed are unwilling to 'damn' its contradictory, and where men of a more flaccid faith are nervously eager to bring their beliefs into harmony with every nine days' wonder in textual or scientific discovery. As in theology, so in morals. The very conception of an absolute right and wrong has perished from common thinking. Our crimes are chargeable on our ancestry, and our vices are pitied as diseases. Every villain must be assumed to be acting conscientiously; condemnation of wrong-doing is lack of human sympathy; and Hedonism is the real motive of what has been miscalled Duty. No one can be quite certain about what he himself ought to do; and to affect certainty about others would be a social impertinence. In this great department of human life, even if in no other, I wish for an increase of that Cocksureness which Mr. Gladstone seemed to deprecate. I plead for clear judgment and resolute action in the sphere of moral conduct.

II

MANNERS, ANCIENT AND MODERN

'LET us respect the ancient manners.' But, before we can respect them, we must know what they were. And the epitome of society in the nineteenth century is the transition from Ceremony to Enjoyment, or, if you prefer, from discipline to license. Stateliness was the note of 1800; free-and-easiness was the note of 1900. A hundred years ago a son called his father 'sir;' to-day he calls him 'dad.' Then a rich man kept as many servants as he could afford; now he keeps as few as he can do with. It is related of the spendthrift Duke of Buckingham that when ruin was staring him in the face, and a friend suggested that perhaps it was not necessary to keep (in addition to a French *chef* and an English roasting-cook) an Italian confectioner, he exclaimed: 'Good Gad, mayn't a man have a biscuit with his glass of sherry?' In those great days a rich man sailed along in a coach-and-four, with two footmen behind; now he dives into the Twopenny Tube or scales the dizzy heights of the

green 'bus. A famous praiser of 'old times, the Dowager Duchess of Cleveland (1792–1883), once told me that she believed the present Lord Salisbury had no carriage. On my expressing innocent surprise she replied, 'I have been told that Lord Salisbury goes about London in a BROUGHAM,' and her tone could not have expressed a more lively horror if the vehicle had been a coster's barrow. The Dowager Duchess of Beaufort, who died in 1889, used to thank heaven that she had never driven in a hack-coach nor sat in the pit at the play—by which derogatory synonyms she indicated cabs and stalls.

To our grandparents dancing was an ordered pomp of steps and figures. Even the newly-imported waltz was slow and ceremonious. To-day their descendants riot in the Kitchen Lancers, or shove their partners along to the exhilarating measure of the Washington Post. Then royalty, if it ever quitted its own circle, made stately progresses from Hatfield to Woburn, and from Holkham to Belvoir. Now it rattles off to spend its week-end amid the meretricious splendours of the stockbroker's suburban paradise.

Probably in all ages of history men have liked money, but a hundred years ago they did not talk about it in Society. The only creditable form of wealth was rent. The profits of business were regarded as indecent. When a financier was ennobled

as a reward for having lent money to influential persons, it was an indispensable condition that he sold out of business and invested his money in land. Samuel Rogers, indeed, was notoriously a banker, but if his friends wished to remain on speaking terms with him they must needs pretend to believe that he lived in affluence on the profits of his poetry. Not thirty years ago a gentleman of the old school expressed in my hearing the most indignant astonishment because an artist whom he had employed sent him a photograph at Christmas: 'Are all my tradespeople going to send their pictures?' To-day a duke's son will pull a sample of kamptulicon out of his pocket and beg his hostess to remember him when she re-covers the kitchen floor, or will send her husband a speculative bottle of peach brandy with the compliments of his firm.

So much for Ceremony. I turn now to Enjoyment. The century just closed has seen the most astonishing change in the nature and quantity of its amusements. A newspaper of 1800 lies before me as I write. It contains a debate in the House of Commons on bull-baiting, in which that practice is glorified as national, humane, and popular, conducive to innocent merriment, and improving to the breed of dogs; an account of a prize-fight, in which one of the combatants 'vomited a great deal of blood at almost every

round, and was taken for dead from the stage;' and advertisements of public shows in the way of giants, 'royal tygers,' and albinos—'elegant in form, their eyes of a sparkling red, and in perpetual motion.' Describing London as it was in the thirties, Lord Beaconsfield, who knew it well, wrote in 1874:

'At that time London was a very dull city, instead of being as it is now, a very amusing one. Probably there never was a city in the world with so vast a population which was so melancholy. . . . There were, one might almost say, only two theatres, and they so huge that it was difficult to see or hear in either. Their monopolies, no longer redeemed by the stately genius of the Kembles, the pathos of Miss O'Neill, or the fiery passion of Kean, were already menaced, and were soon about to fall; but the crowd of diminutive but sparkling substitutes which have since taken their place had not yet appeared. There were no Alhambras then and no Cremornes, no palaces of crystal in terraced gardens, no casinos, no music halls, no aquaria, no promenade concerts. Evans's existed, but not in the fulness of its modern development; and the most popular place of resort was the barbarous conviviality of the Cider Cellar.'

During the nineteenth century London has developed a hundred new forms of enjoyment. Lord's and Hurlingham, polo and pigeon-shooting,

tennis-parties and cycle-parties and water-parties, croquet disinterred and golf glorified—all these are notable additions to the stock of the Londoner's pleasures; quite as notable, and much less wholesome, is the enormous development of gambling, at Monte Carlo, at Newmarket, on the Stock Exchange, and in the boudoir. Poker slays its thousands, and Bridge its tens of thousands. Again, the practice of dining in public has developed with extraordinary rapidity. Restaurants and hotels are crowded with feasters who thirty years ago would no more have eaten in a public saloon than they would have washed in it.

Another most notable change of recent times has been the social emancipation of women. It may safely be said that whatever men do nowadays women do. They drive, ride, hunt, shoot, fish, skate, swim, fence, and smoke. They go everywhere, read and talk about everything. They release men from all restraints of ceremony, and almost of decorum in their company. Disease, a subject formerly tabooed, is now a favourite topic; and men and women bandy pleasantries about appendicitis and maternity. Women gaze unmoved on the most risky plays, and freely canvas the lubricities of books and of life. The younger the woman the more complete the emancipation. 'It's not the sort of book one would give one's mother to read,' was a girl's description of a notorious novel.

Seventy years ago, according to Lord Tennyson, it was 'repose' that 'stamped the caste of Vere de Vere.' Now it is bustle. No one stays at home. The 'salon,' if ever it existed in London, is extinct. Everyone is always rushing somewhere, seeing something, hunting after somebody. Sunday is completely secularized. Life is lived in public, and perpetual motion is the law of existence.

While stateliness has vanished, comfort has greatly increased. Even luxury is general. The standard of cooking is immensely raised, and the most unpretentious dinners show ingenuity and imagination. Material beauty is widely diffused, and nowhere so conspicuously displayed as in furniture and decoration. The dynasty of horsehair and mahogany fled before the peacocks' feathers and blue plates of the æsthetic army. It was easy enough to make fun of the æsthetes, but they delivered England from the tyrannous bondage of conventional ugliness.

With regard to the amelioration in our drinking habits, I do not feel so confident as some social critics. It is true we no longer emulate the bishop (Mr. Gladstone remembered him) who, when his host asked, 'Shall we have any more wine, my lord?' replied, 'Thank you, not till we have disposed of what is before us.' But we drink at luncheon, and this our grandfathers never did; we nerve ourselves with whisky and

soda, and whet our appetites with sherry and bitters. Women drink at least as freely as men. We do not get drunk, but we are always drinking.

Yet one more change of great importance has passed over our social life. A hundred years ago Society was a very small and compact body. It contained, of course, its friendships and its enmities, but everyone knew everyone. A lady who was presented to Queen Charlotte told me that at her first Drawing-room the whole company only numbered forty. Now Society is a vast system of concentric circles; the outermost rings extend beyond South Kensington and Marylebone to Putney and Hampstead, and its innermost core is Marlborough House. Birth, breeding, rank, accomplishments, eminence in literature, eminence in art, eminence in public service—all these things still count for something in Society. But combined they are only as the dust of the balance when weighed against the all-prevalent power of money. The worship of the Golden Calf is the characteristic cult of modern Society.

A good many years ago Dr. Pusey, who was born in 1800 and was an aristocrat both paternally and maternally, made some interesting reflections upon good manners. 'It used to strike me in young days how the preference of others to self, the great shock which it evidently was to give pain to anyone, the

consideration of everyone's feelings, the thinking of others rather than oneself, the pains that no one should feel neglected, the deference shown to the weak or the aged, the unconscious courtesy towards those secularly inferior were the beauty of the refined worldly manners of the Old School; that it was acting upon Christian principle, and if in any case it became soul-less, as apart from Christianity, the beautiful form was there, into which real life might re-enter.' I question if anyone surveying the manners of Society in the present day could describe them in those eulogistic terms. The 'beautiful form' has vanished, and the outward aspect of modern Society is as hideous as its inner spirit. The golden age of English Society is covered by the twenty years of Queen Victoria's married life, when the most elevating and refining influences, emanating from the place of supreme authority, curbed the evil tendencies of wealth and fashion with a salutary discipline. Burke taught, in a passage as ethically questionable as rhetorically beautiful, that vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness. To-day we have the evil and the grossness conjoined —the morals of the Tuileries with the manners of Greenwich Fair.

III

AVE ATQUE VALE

OUR subject to-day[1] is chosen for us. We could not evade it if we would. *The Queen is dead.* One looks at the words in a sort of stupefaction as one writes them. The Queen is dead. King Edward VII sits upon her throne. The old order changeth; and the most indifferent Onlooker must feel as if the sun had failed in the heavens, or some great landmark of the natural world had been suddenly removed.

'From the throne to the tomb—wealth, splendour, flattery, all gone!' The look of favour, the voice of power, no more; the deserted palace—the mourners ready—the dismal march of death prepared. Who are we, and what are we? and for what has God made us? and why are we doomed to this frail and unquiet existence? Who does not feel all this? In whose heart does it not provoke appeal to and dependence on God? Before whose eyes does it not bring the folly and the nothingness of all things human?'

[1] January 26, 1901.

That is one aspect of the great event, and obviously the most natural. And yet from the earlier records of the reign just now concluded we can produce another, and perhaps a worthier, view of the moral consequences which should follow a great departure. 'Let nobody complain. A time must come, sooner or later, in everyone's life when he has to part with advantages, connexions, supports, consolations that he has had hitherto, and face a new state of things. Everyone knows that he is not always to have all that he has now; he says to himself, "What shall I do when this or that stay or connexion is gone?" and the answer is, that he will do without it . . . a more real and graver life begins—a firmer, harder disinterestedness, able to go on its course by itself. Let us see in the change a call to greater earnestness, sincerer simplicity, and more solid manliness. What were weaknesses before will be sins now.'

Those two quotations, read together, seem to embody the moral teaching of our national sorrow. The very fact that human life, even when lived on the most exalted stage and enriched by all favouring circumstance, is so transient and frail and limited a thing should inspire one to take it more seriously, to use it more diligently, to extract—even to extort—from it whatever it is capable of yielding in the way, not of enjoyment, but of service. We live under institutions

which incorporate tradition and prolong the reign of the dead. But the past is properly used only when it is employed in the service of the present and the future. We look backward and learn our lesson; we look round and apply it; we look forward in the unconquerable hope that fifty years hence someone may be better or happier or wiser because we were true to our time and to its demands. 'Meanwhile, if these hours be dark, as indeed in many ways they are, at least do not let us sit deedless, like fools and fine gentlemen, thinking the common toil not good enough for us, and beaten by the muddle; but rather let us work like good fellows trying by some dim candle-light to set our workshop ready against to-morrow's daylight.' The essential pre-requisite for disinterested effort is faith in human progress. If we satisfy ourselves with Lord Tennyson's chilly doctrine (even though Mr. Gladstone seemed to endorse it) that

> The course of Time will swerve,
> Crook, and turn upon itself in many a backward-streaming curve,

we knock the heart out of all manly endeavour for the times ahead. Could Howard or Wilberforce, Romilly or Shaftesbury have thrown their souls into the works which now make their names glorious and their posterity happy if they had suffered themselves to believe that the horrors of the prison and the factory, the

slave-ship and the gallows, were destined, after temporary disappearance, to return? No. 'The labour of life is cheered by the song of life, and the lessons of Hope are, on the whole, the lessons of Wisdom.' To believe that the world is going from bad to worse; that each age and each year loses some old good and brings some fresh evil; that every change, in life, in faith, in society, is a deterioration; that novelty is synonymous with mischief; and that all apparent progress is essential retrogression—all this may be a suitable creed for spirits which are prematurely old or constitutionally timid, but surely it can find no response in resolute wills and sanguine hearts and natures which believe in and long to prove their own high capacities. To believe that the movement of the human race is on the whole towards good, that Christianity is not a total failure, that civilization is not a heartless sham; that, under the influence of them both, the world is gradually passing, not away from, but towards, its Golden Age; and that we, in our various places and vocations, can do something to accelerate its progress—this, I think, is a sentiment which ennobles human existence. This answers the question, Is life worth living? This, more than any other principle, except only the kindred passion for freedom, has characterized in all ages the generous

souls who have led the great onward march of redeemed humanity.

These thoughts have a direct connexion with the transcendent topic of the hour. If we had just closed a reign which had been spent in frivolity or dissipation, in vacuous idleness or heinous debauchery, in the insensate pursuit of territorial aggrandizement or the more vulgar and sordid accumulation of mere wealth, we, as honest men and good citizens, could only close our eyes and keep silence. But to-day it is far otherwise. The most independent, the least courtier-like of onlookers may record the fact that Queen Victoria laboured constantly and consistently for that social amelioration of her people's lot to which, in the first words which she uttered as Queen, she formally pledged her life. Lord Beaconsfield, describing her first Council, wrote: 'Fair and serene, she has the blood and beauty of the Saxon. Will it be her proud destiny at length to bear relief to suffering millions and, with that soft hand which might inspire troubadours and guerdon knights, break the last links in the chain of Saxon thraldom?' To-day we can answer 'Yes' to this wistful question of genius and humanity. If there is one feature in the national life of the last sixty years on which Englishmen may justly pride themselves, it is the amelioration of the social condition of the workers. Putting aside all

ecclesiastical revivals, all purely political changes, and all appeals, however successful, to the horrible arbitrament of the sword, it is social reform which has made Queen Victoria's reign glorious. We have seen the regulation of dangerous labour, the protection of women and children from excessive toil, the removal of the tax on bread, the establishment of a system of national education. We have seen the restriction of capital punishment, the reformation of the Penal Code, the abolition of the duel, the prohibition of brutal and degrading sports, and at any rate some legislative interference with cruelty to animals. With all these reforms we know that the royal and motherly heart of Queen Victoria was in keen sympathy, and many of them she personally and actively promoted.

Whatever else she was or was not, the Queen was essentially a worker. All who are familiar with her journals will remember how small a part the pleasures of queenship play, compared with its duties, labours, and anxieties. In her public letters to her subjects the idea of work was always dominant. After the Jubilee of 1887 she wrote of the welcome which she had received: 'It has shown that the labour and anxiety of fifty long years have been appreciated by my people. This feeling, and the sense of duty towards my dear country and subjects, who are so inseparably bound up with my life, will encourage

me in my task, often a very difficult and arduous one, during the remainder of my life.'

And now the task is completed and the reward is won. The 'Well done' of Heaven is echoed in the *Ave atque Vale* of earth. We look back and we look forward. We render high thanks for a reign dedicated throughout its unequalled length to the things which are pure and lovely and of good report, to the abatement of human misery, and to that righteousness which exalteth a nation. We face the future with the deep-rooted hope that King Edward VII may prove himself worthy of his illustrious traditions, and may lead his people forward on the truly royal road of virtuous living and social service.

IV

CHIVALRY

'LET us recollect that, if the true soul of Chivalry has died among us, with it all that is good in society has died.' This admonition of the great Onlooker whose survey of our national condition has supplied the text of these chapters has its clear appropriateness to the present hour. To-day[1] all that was mortal of Queen Victoria will rest in St. George's historic chapel, the very ark and sanctuary of English chivalry.

> Ne'er to those chambers where the mighty rest,
> Since their foundation, came a nobler guest:
> Nor e'er was to the bowers of bliss convey'd
> A fairer spirit or more welcome shade.

The moment is suitable for some attempt to trace the true character of Chivalry, and to estimate the part which it has played and is playing in the world.

The characteristic virtue of Chivalry is that, where it flourishes, the despicable vices of greed and lust and cruelty hide their diminished heads. They do not

[1] February 2, 1901.

become less evil or less gross, but they simply cannot live in the pure atmosphere of Chivalry. And though I thus dissent from the last sentence of Burke's famous eulogy, the rest of it always seems more admirable the more deeply one studies it. If Chivalry is indeed the enthusiasm of the strong for the rights of the weak, how perfectly do Burke's accumulated titles describe it! 'The unbought grace of life,'—the most beautiful attribute of human character; unbought indeed, and unbuyable by anything that the world has to offer. 'The cheap defence of nations,' infinitely stronger than the costliest armies and the most majestic fleets. 'The nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise;' for true manliness is the championship of the oppressed, and the most heroic enterprise is to risk all for their cause. 'Sensibility of principle,' which habitually subordinates gain to right; 'chastity of honour,' which feels itself wounded when the weak are downtrodden, and which dares to be merciful just because it is brave. Well might Burke say of such a quality as this that it ennobled whatever it touched, and well might he exhaust the resources of his eloquence in bewailing what he believed to be its extinction. More than a century has passed, and once again people who have the true honour and fair fame of England at heart are saying, as Burke said in 1790, that Chivalry is dead. And yet perhaps, as he was mistaken then, so we may

be mistaken now. Perhaps Chivalry is not dead, but only sleeping. Perhaps its smoking flax is not yet quenched, even by the mephitic vapours of greed and cowardice and vainglory through which it is struggling to breathe.

But, if Chivalry is not dead, at least it is true that the chivalrous ideal is lamentably inconspicuous in national affairs; that Government and Opposition alike have apparently lost all thought of championing a weaker against a stronger cause; and that material gain, in the shape of territory and goldfields and shares and dividends, is the only visible object of national ambition.

It is the appointed function of rulers and statesmen, of the highly-placed and the influential, to guide the public conscience and set up true standards of national thinking and acting. A similar duty is even more manifestly laid on the authorized teachers of national religion. And where all these high functionaries fail conspicuously in their duty, and either leave the national conscience unguided or guide it wrong, the whole tone of public life is necessarily lowered. The baser and grosser elements of the national character expand and predominate; the better elements shrink away abashed; and, as they no longer make themselves seen or felt, they are naturally treated as if they did not exist. This is pre-eminently true with regard to

Chivalry. The chivalrous idea has now for several years been either suppressed or misrepresented. Some politicians have ignored Chivalry as an element in international dealing; others, more mischievous, have set up a false idea of Chivalry, and bidden their follower worship a hideous idol instead of the true divinity. The real chivalry has vanished so completely from the stage of public affairs that an Onlooker may be pardoned if, like Burke before him, he says in his haste that it has died. And yet, after all, it may be that we only need some 'God-gifted, organ-voice of England' —some fresh Chatham, or Burke, or Bright, or Gladstone—to awake the national conscience from its slumber, and collect the scattered and hidden elements of national righteousness. Men who were undergraduates at Oxford in the seventies will perhaps remember, across an interspace of thirty years, the splendid oration in which the great preacher of the time enforced the lesson of the Curse on Meroz. 'Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof.' And why? 'Because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' Meroz was found wanting on a great occasion, as it could not have been found wanting if it had been sound at heart. To refuse aid to the sacred cause until it was certain of success was, in a man or a community belonging to the covenanted

nation, an act of virtual apostasy; and Meroz was not merely politically disfranchised: it was religiously excommunicated. 'Meroz,' said the preacher, 'is never unrepresented in human history,' and thrice unhappy are we, whether as nations or as individuals, if we fail to hear the voice which bids us risk our all for a good cause, or, hearing, refuse to obey it.

And here let me turn aside from generalizations to give a concrete instance of such a summons quickly heard and followed even to the death. When, as a consequence of the Armenian massacres, war broke out between Greece and Turkey in the spring of 1897, a young Englishman was travelling near the coast of Greece. He had youth and genius and money, a happy home, and devoted friends. He had no natural turn for fighting, no obligations to Greece, no reason, as the world would judge, to choose anything but a life of ease and culture and enjoyment. But the voice reached him, and he straightway rose and followed it without delay. On April 5, 1897, he wrote in his journal:

'This may be the last notice I shall ever write in this book. . . . I am off this afternoon to Arta to enlist in the Greek army; and let this be understood by those who may read this book, should I never return —I go of my own free will entirely, having been persuaded by nobody to risk my life in the service of the

Greeks, but rather having been hindered from carrying out my intentions by well-meaning friends. I have not time to write much this morning, but I only wish it to be clearly understood that no one is responsible in the least degree for the step I have taken, which to many may appear as an act of madness, but to myself (who have given the matter the fullest consideration) the least a man of honour can perform towards a country which, crying for Liberty in the name of the Cross, has been insulted and thwarted by each so-called civilized Power successively. Unfortunately I have no time to explain myself more clearly, but lovers of Freedom will recognize a deeper motive for my thus offering myself to the service of a distressed and misunderstood country.'

Eighteen days later the writer of these noble words died gloriously for faith and freedom at the battle of Pentepigadia, and no one even knows the place where his body lies. I wish I might think that this true tale of Christian chivalry would lead even one reader of this page to realize for himself and for his country the moral glory of an absolute and calculated sacrifice.

I turn now from the Chivalry of the present to the Chivalry of the past, and try to estimate the contribution which it made to the greatness and stability of Queen Victoria's reign.

During the later years of William IV the fires of Revolution, which in the preceding reign had sometimes sprung into visible activity, were smouldering below the surface. A very slight concussion would have rekindled them. Great political forces, hostile to the established order and encouraged by the recent victory of Reform, were no longer restrained by the strong hand of executive authority. The King's next brother, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland and afterwards King of Hanover, had incurred a popular detestation, the grounds of which cannot at this time of day be profitably re-stated. I have received them orally from people closely allied with him both by blood and by office, and I content myself with saying, in Mr. Justin McCarthy's words, that 'they might seem to have belonged to the worst days of the Lower Empire.' Grave men, not the least given to exaggeration, who had taken part in the public life of the time, have assured me of their firm conviction that, had the Duke of Cumberland succeeded William IV as King of England, no power on earth could have averted a revolution. Between the country and this dire consummation there stood only one young and fragile life. Readers of Mr. Allen Upward's fascinating tale 'God Save the Queen' will remember the desperate counsels of the disaffected faction which sought to prevent or impede the succession of Princess Victoria to her

uncle's throne, and my traditions assure me that Mr. Upward's fiction has at least a basis of hard fact. O'Connell more than hinted at it in a famous oration against the Orange Society, and indications of it are to be found in all contemporary memoirs and correspondence.[1]

Here it was Chivalry that saved the State. The Reform Act had not precipitated the millennium. The sufferings of the poor were as deep as ever. There was just as much material and social misery to feed the fires of revolution as there had been under George or William, with the added bitterness of political disappointment. But Chivalry quenched the flame. No one would have scrupled (except for prudential considerations) to upset the thrones of hoary and disreputable kings, but there was something un-English —nay, rather, unmanly and unnatural—in the notion of making war upon a young, innocent, and friendless Queen. Her very helplessness was her panoply. All Chivalry, in its best and noblest significance, rallied to the defence of the defenceless.

And if Chivalry did much towards placing Queen Victoria on her throne, it did no less towards maintaining her, in increasing honour and prosperity, where it had placed her. It is impossible to exaggerate the softening and harmonizing effect of a queenly influ-

[1] *E.g. The Life of Sir William Molesworth*, p. 89.

ence on the daily and hourly working of our delicately-poised Government. In the relations between George III, George IV, even William IV, and their respective Ministries, conflicts of will, stratagems and plots, even stand-up fights, were incidents not unknown. But they were impossible in the case of a girl-Queen and Ministers who stood towards her in a quasi-parental relation. The 'Bed-chamber Plot' (as it was nicknamed) of 1839, where the personal wishes of the Sovereign conflicted with the political demands of the Minister, could scarcely have passed off without disturbance of the constitutional balance if the Sovereign had been a man. When Lord Palmerston was (most deservedly) dismissed from the Foreign Office in 1851, and submitted to the rebuff with a meekness which surprised his friends, he said, 'I had to remember that I was not dealing only with my Sovereign, but with a lady whom I had offended.' It was Lord Beaconsfield's genuine, though sometimes hyperbolic, devotion to womanhood that enabled him to overcome the dislike with which he had been regarded at Court, and by chivalry (though of a rather *rococo* type) to make himself the most powerful of the Queen's Prime Ministers.

No one who is old enough to remember the masterly letters of 'Verax' will need to be reminded of the strain to which, under sinister influences, the con-

stitutional system was exposed during the great controversy on the Eastern Question between 1876 and 1880. That the strain did not reach bursting-point was beyond all question due to the facts that the Throne was occupied by a Queen, and that the real leader of the militant Opposition was the man who of all others most ardently cherished the principle of chivalrous loyalty to the Crown.

No one can doubt that our late Sovereign's womanhood, with its added and ancillary graces of wifehood, widowhood, and motherhood, diffused 'in widest commonalty' that sense of chivalrous devotion which no mere splendour or pomp or military triumph could evoke. The Queen was a stronger Sovereign because of the crushing sorrow which darkened her life at its midday. Each blow or bereavement which befell her has strengthened her grasp on the affections of her people. It was this aspect of her life, rudely touched by a captious demagogue, which suddenly roused John Bright's unexpected and indignant protest. 'I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of those who are possessors of Crowns. But I could not sit and hear that observation without a sense of wonder and of pain. I think there has been by many persons a great injustice done to the Queen in reference to her desolate and widowed position. And I venture to say this—that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm, or be she

the wife of one of our labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and affection is not at all likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy with you.'

That 'great and generous sympathy' has been manifested in ever richer and richer abundance, and now it has its reward. In thought and imagination all England kneels like one vast family by the resting-place of the Mother-Queen. The spirit of Chivalry, which she did so much to foster, must henceforward wear new forms and speak in unaccustomed language. There is a true Chivalry, and there is a false. We have enjoyed the one; God preserve us from the other.

V

THE COUNTERFEIT

'THERE is a true chivalry, and there is a false. We have enjoyed the one; God preserve us from the other.' I venture thus to turn a peroration into an exordium, and to use the closing words of my last chapter as the text of this. 'Chivalry' is a word which may convey very different ideas. Some of us, when we were boys, learned our notion of chivalry from 'Westward Ho!' We have not even yet forgotten the indignant disgust which we felt when, a few years later, our teacher, Charles Kingsley (corrupted in the meantime by contact with Courts and camps), proclaimed that the conduct of Governor Eyre in flogging and shooting and hanging women was the most brilliant manifestation of 'modern chivalry.'

To illustrate an exactly opposite use of the same word, let me quote an interesting extract from a sermon preached by the late Dean Merivale on the occasion of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee:—

'It is now just fifty years ago, within a week or

two, that I happened to be taking holiday abroad, as a young man from college, and to fall in with an American family, a gentleman a little older than myself and his lady companions. It was in the summer of 1836, not long after the great popular excitement of the first Reform Bill, when the ground-swell of that passionate storm was still heaving under us, and cries for wild and wilder revolution were still heard around us, or but slowly and dubiously receding from us. Church and State were threatened; the word "republic" was muttered; King William was still on his throne, but he had waxed old and feeble and his end was plainly at hand. What should happen next was in everyone's thoughts, and most of us were, I think, shy to make answer. "Your Sovereign is not expected to survive long, is he?" remarked my American friend. I bowed. "And who, sir, will succeed to your throne?" "The Princess Victoria, his niece, is the next in succession." "Quite a young person, is she not?" "Yes; indeed, I believe, about seventeen or eighteen." "Indeed, sir. And do you mean to say that the great British people will suffer a young girl like that to rule over them?" Thereupon my young and chivalrous blood was stirred, and I answered proudly: "Yes, I do; and more than that, the nation will rally to her, and if life is spared her I think she will uphold the British Throne for half a

century." My friend bowed politely, but he looked by no means satisfied. It was only recently that I chanced to meet him again, after so long an interval. He remembered me, and came here on purpose to visit me. We talked of the old time and of what had passed between us. "Well, sir, you were about right, after all," he said before he left me.'

My young and chivalrous blood was stirred. Those words, taken in their context, aptly illustrate the point for which I was contending in my last chapter. The knowledge that the new Sovereign was a woman, that she was very young, that she was in an extremely difficult position, and that she was supposed to be practically friendless, conciliated popular sympathy for her and inclined towards her the hearts of many who were by no means devoted to the monarchical principle. She was weak: therefore she must be defended. This was the true spirit of chivalry, and it probably did more than any other force to strengthen the foundations of Queen Victoria's throne. From that throne there has constantly issued a beneficent influence which, during these sad weeks,[1] all England, and indeed all Europe, has been forward to acknowledge.

But there is a time for all things and an end to all things—even to the obsequies and panegyrics of an incomparable Sovereign, and to the contemplation of

[1] January and February, 1901.

the causes which made her reign glorious. We have said enough about the true chivalry which has served us so well, and I must be pardoned if I turn my thoughts towards that false chivalry which threatens to be our undoing. Every Jerusalem, it has been said, has its Samaria close at hand, and everything that is excellent on earth has its imitations and its burlesques, which become, not seldom, its negations and its contradictories. It is thus with chivalry. The spirit with which Burke regarded Marie Antoinette degenerated —alas, that a disciple should have to say so!—into the passion of Sir Walter Scott for George IV. The spirit which rallied to the succour of a girl-Queen has its exact contradictory in the temper which prostrates itself before a throne because it is strong. The false chivalry is indeed the precise negation of the true. The true chivalry revered the past and was the 'faithful guardian of great memories, in the midst of irreverent and ephemeral visions.' The false chivalry worships the rising sun and makes friends with those forces which have the promise of the future. The true chivalry was indeed the spirit of

> An old and haughty nation, proud in arms,

but proud in them because they were the instruments by which innocence and weakness all over the world were championed against brutal tyranny and lawless

force. The false chivalry hounds on its armaments against the life and freedom of small and defenceless communities, while it hides its diminished head before the threatened wrath of great and well-armed States. The true chivalry was bound, not so much by rule as by an inborn and dominant instinct, to treat its opponents with all knightly courtesy, to recognize their courage, to give them credit for sincerity and patriotism. The new chivalry, or what masquerades in that misused name, discards this tradition, and calumniates where it cannot kill.

You fought your foeman badly, but you boasted all the more;
You blundered, and felt bigger by a foot;
You jeered at him for being small, and when that farce was o'er
You settled down to hate him like a brute.
And you hated—how you hated! How you slandered more than slew,
How you slavered silly poison—why remind you?
You've done it, and you're doing it, and still you mean to do,
For you've left the thought of manliness behind you!

Bull's son, Fool's son, son of a Scullionaire,
Son of a Blither and Bellow-Along—every Ass his Bray!
Squirting slime on a valiant foe, to show how much you dare—
But what does the Good God think of you? Say, say, say!

And once again, the true chivalry fought for honour: the false chivalry fights for gold. It is the ill-omened union of the speculative with the military spirit which has produced this horrible portent. The reckless de-

termination to be rich, the cynical disregard of all moral restraints, the bloodthirsty resolve to further financial enterprise with bullets and bayonets, the shameless glorification of brute force—these are some of the elements which compose the new chivalry. Its external sign is the increasing love of military pomp, which disfigures alike our jubilees and our obsequies, and rears its horrid front even in the sanctuaries of the Prince of Peace. My greatest fear for England is that this spirit may increase and prevail. My most earnest hope, though qualified by much misgiving, is that the New Reign may witness a return to the Older Chivalry.

VI

LUXURY AND SIMPLICITY

Now, following the inverted order of Mr. Gladstone's thought, I come to 'simplicity of life,' and this may conveniently be discussed in connexion with that 'imitative luxury' which he mentioned in an earlier paragraph. I do not propose to consider luxury in its economic bearings, nor to enquire whether the consumption of champagne and the purchase of diamonds eventually increase or diminish our national wealth. I leave all such problems to those 'bold, bad men' who haunt the Political Economy Club—to the 'sophisters, economists, and calculators' whom Burke so rightly abhorred. I range myself with my uninstructed neighbours—the tradesmen of Piccadilly and the lodging-house keepers of Pimlico—and I rest assured that the presence of a Court at Buckingham Palace, with its gilt coaches and scarlet footmen, will in some undefined way increase our material prosperity. Just now I am thinking of luxury merely in its moral bear-

ings. Let us 'hold by, or get back to, some regard for simplicity of life.' If 'simplicity of life' means spending less on ourselves and more on our neighbours, we cannot have too much of it. But if it is only to be a plausible excuse for parsimony, away with it to the limbo of detected hypocrisies. The love of splendour, even when we cannot share it, seems to be an instinct of our nature. To quote only the salient illustration of the moment, it is manifested each time that the King and Queen appear in public. William IV once threatened to go down to the House of Lords in a hack coach, if the state carriage could not be got ready in time; but it would not have been a popular move. King Edward VII might have validly and constitutionally opened Parliament in a billycock hat and a pea-jacket, with his Queen in the waterproof cloak of a district visitor; but they would have been hissed in the streets. We love 'barbaric pearl and gold,' plumes and diamonds, rich colours, and martial music. A judge's scarlet gown and a Lifeguardsman's cuirass give us real though transient pleasure. We are already beginning to anticipate the joy of a truly magnifical coronation; and a political economist who should venture, as in 1831, to suggest that the august rite was a waste of money would fall a victim to the fury of the populace. No; if simplicity of life means the abolition of visible splendour, we will have none of it.

But there is simplicity of another kind—the simplicity which maintains great pomp for public uses and recognizes the quasi-sacramental value of spectacular effect; but is personally modest, personally frugal, personally temperate, personally unostentatious. It was the disclosure of this spirit that made Queen Victoria's books of 'Journals' and 'Leaves' so extraordinarily popular. 'Things always taste so much better in small houses' was the Prince Consort's wisest saying. It is this idea of simplicity concealed by splendour which creates all the eternally popular fables about kings who sleep in iron bedsteads, and queens who knit stockings, and emperors who dine off a single dish. The national instinct feels that simplicity of life is an essentially private virtue. Like the austerity of poetry, though real it should be concealed.

> A robe of sackcloth next the smooth white skin,
> Radiant, adorn'd outside; a hidden ground
> Of thought and of austerity within.

'Let us beware of that imitative luxury which is tempting all of us to ape our betters.'

How far is this a needed admonition? The very phrase 'our betters' has an archaic flavour. I fear it meant on Mr. Gladstone's lips our social superiors. His

respect for the powers that be—from the Crown to the Vestry, from Cæsar to Dogberry—for all the ordered hierarchy of Society, was an inherent principle of his nature. The sumptuary laws of the Middle Age, which permitted a peeress to robe herself in silk and condemned the burgess's wife to grogram, would have found a supporter in Mr. Gladstone, and he would have severely rebuked any silk-ward longings in the burgess's wife as 'imitative luxury' which tempted her to 'ape her betters.'

A lady who has returned to London and Society after many years of absence said to me, 'I notice that girls marry nowadays on £500 a year, and each has a diamond tiara. In my day we didn't marry on so little, but we had no tiaras.' Which things are an allegory. If the girl's tiara is an attempt to make the world believe that she is richer than she is, it is vulgar and odious. If it is simply a gratification of her æsthetic sense and an adornment of the society in which she moves, it is natural and becoming. And the same principle applies to all those improvements in domestic life—furniture, decoration, books, and cooks—which have so conspicuously marked the last twenty years. They may indeed amount to luxury; but if not imitative the luxury is not culpable. I confess that I see no national danger here. Private luxury, if attempted in

a spirit of social emulation, would be contemptible indeed. But, cultivated on its own merits, it is merely a superior form of comfort, and may be justified on the grounds which justify a spring-mattress or a lemon-squash. Public splendour brightens life; and whatever brightens life tends to happiness and virtue.

VII

PLUTOCRACY

'WE have had Ploutocrats who were patterns of every virtue, as well may be said in an age which has known Samuel Morley; but let us be jealous of Ploutocracy and of its tendency to infect Aristocracy, its elder and nobler sister.'

In a former chapter I tried to illustrate the true Chivalry by comparing it with its counterfeit. Conversely, I might illustrate the corrupt Plutocracy (or Ploutocracy, as Mr. Gladstone preferred to spell it), which is so manifest a peril to our national well-being, by comparison with the influence of wealth when wielded by such a man as Samuel Morley. Even Mr. Matthew Arnold would, I suppose, have allowed that Puritanism, in its day and generation, did something to strengthen and purify the fibre of national life. Samuel Morley, alike in his inward character and his outward life, was a worthy descendant of those Puritan ancestors whose blood he inherited, and from whom it is not fanciful to

suppose that he derived his characteristic qualities of temperance, courage, and unwavering will. To Samuel Morley the world was intensely real. It was a place where hard work must be definitely done, and where there was no room for idlers and dreamers. Like Mr. Gladstone's father, 'he could not understand or tolerate those who, perceiving an object to be good, did not at once and actively pursue it.' His wealth was immense, and to a great extent of his own making; yet his chief enjoyment was not in buying —still less in hoarding—but in giving. He regarded himself as a steward rather than as an owner, and realized with all the intensity of his strong nature his responsibility for the right use of this tremendous power. He might have adopted as his own the pregnant motto of an Elizabethan benefactor—'Donorum Dei dispensatio fidelis.' Like everyone who is known or even believed to be rich, Samuel Morley received innumerable begging-letters. He read or glanced at all, and briefly noted on each instructions for the answer to be sent. The large majority were simply marked 'Yes,' with '£10' or '£5' added as the sole memorandum of the disbursement. Religious institutions—colleges, churches, chapels, mission-rooms, and missionary societies—had the first place in his regard. Then came hospitals, asylums, orphanages, schools, and every

other enterprise of secular benevolence. To individuals he was lavish. Widows and orphans, overburdened clergymen, exhausted workers, men of business who had met with misfortune, were the constant recipients of his thoughtful and discriminating charity. His way of giving was characteristic. If he could conceal his share in a benevolent act, he concealed it; if it must be known, he studiously underrated it. He did personally, by enquiry, by visits, by gracious acts of friendly attention, the errands of mercy which most men as busy and as rich would have delegated to an almoner. He was a cheerful, a modest, and a delicate giver; and if we remember the round sums—£3,000 or £6,000 at a time—which he contributed to large undertakings, and add these to the constant stream of lesser gifts, ranging from five pounds to a thousand, which flowed in response to his private correspondence, we shall probably not be wrong in saying that he was the most munificent giver of his day.

Of course when we have said all this, and have admitted, with Mr. Gladstone, that Samuel Morley was a pattern of every virtue, we still are conscious of some 'obstinate questionings.' Ought millionaires to exist? Do they serve any useful purpose? Is the concentration of vast wealth in few hands a benefit to the community? Harold Skimpole declared that he

appreciated health the more when somebody else was ill; didn't know but what it might be in the scheme of things that A. should squint to make B. happier in looking straight, or that C. should carry a wooden leg to make D. better satisfied with his flesh and blood in a silk stocking. This highly altruistic philosophy, if properly enforced, might indeed reconcile the very poor to the existence of the very rich. But those of us who are not able to embrace so high a doctrine must content ourselves with wishing that, if millionaires are a fixed part of the 'scheme of things,' they would take Samuel Morley as their pattern and exemplar.

Very different is the Plutocracy of which we are the daily witnesses—even, in some ways, the subjects. It is glaringly ostentatious and cynically selfish. While it exhausts the possibilities of physical enjoyment, it keeps its eye steadily fixed on social advancement. When, for its own reasons, it undertakes an errand of charity, it sends fame before blowing trumpets and beating drums. Perhaps its most characteristic action was the inscription of a company-promoter's name on the vessels of gold which he presented to a Christian altar. Surely the force of incongruity could no further go. Well might Mr. Gladstone say, 'Let us be jealous of Ploutocracy.' The power of the purse is everywhere felt, if not seen. It regulates

our journalism. It pollutes our domestic politics. It governs our foreign relations. Lord Beaconsfield once boasted that the government of the world is conducted by sovereigns and statesmen; he might have said, with greater truth, by financiers and loanmongers. Even if we had forgotten the sinister part played by Turkish bonds in 1877 and Egyptian bonds in 1882, we should have learned by recent and bitter experience what finance can do towards involving England in a ruinous, humiliating, and heart-breaking war.

For first there was a little Plant, and mustard-like it grew,
And very hot and yellow it became—
A little 'Plant' for making an immortal fool of you,
And a mortal heap of money by the same.
And you ambled in among it, and you ate and were an Ass;
So a handy beast of burden now they find you!
But the moral is transparent as a sheet of window glass—
You had left your English mother-wit behind you!

Bull's son, Fool's son, son of a Scullionaire,
Son of the Glorified Stockbroker—all on the shout to-day.
Carry your precious burden straight, the hope of the
Chartered Share—
But what would a Wise Man think of you? say—say—say!

By all means, then, let us be 'jealous of Plutocracy,' and let us welcome the signs which are visible both in Europe and in America of a popular rebellion against the degrading tyranny of gold. But as to the 'elder and nobler sister, Aristocracy'—well, her record is not so entirely faultless, her character

not so exalted, that I can feel any very acute emotion when I see her 'infected' by Plutocracy. That the infection is a reality I do not dispute, but it is no new phenomenon. All through the eighteenth century the encroachments of Plutocracy on Aristocracy were proceeding. The exclusive and almost feudal character of the English peerage was destroyed, finally and of set purpose, by Pitt when he declared that every man who had ten thousand a year had a right to be a peer. In Lord Beaconsfield's words, 'he created a plebeian aristocracy and blended it with the patrician oligarchy. He made peers of second-rate squires and fat graziers. He caught them in the alleys of Lombard Street and clutched them from the counting-houses of Cornhill.' The Plutocratic tendencies of the Great Minister were reinforced by the pecuniary necessities of the peerage. There is scarcely a family of the older nobility which has not in its time made a matrimonial alliance with a daughter of some great commercial house. Consanguinity gradually effaced, at any rate in great part, the line of demarcation which separated the noble from the merely rich. And another cause which during the reign of Queen Victoria has conspicuously operated in the same direction is the social prominence obtained by the Jews. I desire to speak with sincere respect of that extraordinary race, among whom I have many friends, and

whose intellectual gifts and domestic virtues go far to justify the Divine choice. But it involves no disrespect to say that during the last sixty years their social standing has undergone a tremendous change. Formerly they dwelt apart; potent, of course, in financial and commercial circles, but separated by countless barriers—racial, religious, ceremonial, social—from the general life of the community. The working of that separation and the reaction to which it led were drawn with singular insight in 'Daniel Deronda.' But of late years, by the operation of causes into which I need not enter, the barriers have been broken down. The great Jewish financiers embody Plutocracy in the fullest and strictest sense of the word; and their ever-growing intimacy with Royalty and with Aristocracy has produced an unmistakable change in the tone and style of English society. Plutocracy to-day is represented among us, not by the Puritan simplicity of Samuel Morley and George Moore, but by the glittering splendours out of which Lord Beaconsfield evolved his Sidonia and his Neuchâtel. It has captured Aristocracy. Will Democracy be proof against the spell?

VIII

INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

THE early and middle parts of Queen Victoria's reign were dominated by the Manchester School. It may savour of presumption for an outsider to dogmatize about that school in a Manchester paper, and it may even seem offensive to criticize what once was so great. Yet the very association of the name of Manchester with a body of principles which so long swayed our political thinking and acting is in itself a high tribute to the mental and moral force of Lancashire; and though some of the performances of the Manchester School may provoke hostility, they can never be treated with contempt.

I do not presume to define what Manchesterism was in the land of its birth and in the minds of its chief apostles. I am considering it in its wider extension and its later developments; as it was promulgated by teachers of less authority and accepted by the average man between, say, 1850 and 1880. So considered, Manchesterism meant unrestricted com-

petition, every man for himself, 'the devil take the hindmost,' and the survival of the fittest. It was pre-eminently a creed for the strong, the vigorous, and the self-reliant; but it had no gospel for the helpless, the hopeless, the incapable, and the downtrodden. Its fatal defect was that it 'expected univeral selfishness to do the work of universal love.'

It is now, roughly speaking, about twenty years since we began to observe the first signs of a rebellion against this intellectual but unmoral theory. The consciences of men began to revolt against a system which left out of account some of the most crying needs of the human heart and some of the grimmest facts of human life. How far this revolt was the result of purely spiritual forces is an enquiry which, if resolutely pursued, would lead us very far afield. But, without embarking on controversy, it may, I think, be alleged as a historical fact that certain people began to ask themselves whether the existing conditions of the economic world could be reconciled with the social teaching of Christianity; whether they who professed to accept that teaching were bound to acquiesce in those conditions; whether they had the power to amend what they could not help deploring; and whether, if they had that power, there was any justification for declining to exercise it. Men who approached the consideration of these problems from the Christian standpoint found

themselves in unexpected, and sometimes unwelcome, alliance with the disciples of a very different theology; and, conversely, the purely humanitarian reformers found themselves joining hands with the sworn servants of what they regarded as a dangerous and irritating superstition. Drawn from the most widely different environments, men met on common ground. 'Divine discontent' with actual conditions inspired them with the ambition of social service. They protested against 'Laissez Faire' and 'Laissez Aller.' They repudiated the dismal fatalism which treats all human misery as the necessary product of unalterable law. They shook off the thraldom of an economic superstition which, while it really is a compound of contradictory theories and unprovable guesses, gives itself the airs of an exact science. They invoked the community to save the individual from being crushed to death in that 'infinite jumble, and mess, and dislocation which men call the Battle of Life.'

'The old Manchesterism had limited the functions of the State to the preservation of life and property (especially property) and the enforcement of contracts. The new Socialism, on the other hand, regarding the State, with Burke, as 'the Nation in its collective and corporate character,' saw in it the one sovereign agent for all moral, material, and social reforms. The State is omnipotent where the individual is powerless; and

in the view of the new Socialists it was bound to concern itself with the health and housing, the food and raiment, the culture, and even the amusements of those who were least able to help themselves. Pompous people called this a policy of 'Panem et Circenses;' flippant ones described it as 'putting Punch and Judy on the rates.' And yet the new doctrine spread, though it was still the day of small things. In sanitary matters the motto of both political parties had always been Clough's sarcastic paraphrase of the Sixth Commandment—

> Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive
> Officiously to keep alive.

But now politicians on both sides began to realize that public health is public duty, and that, at any rate in this one department of social reform, the community must come to the aid of the individual. In reality this was only an extension of the principle which underlay the Poor Law and the Education Law; though the political Polyphemes, who have only one eye, did not perceive it. But the new Socialists were more clear-sighted, and pushed their doctrine to its inevitable conclusion. Political reform was related to social reform merely as the means to the end. Social reform meant the creation of better moral and material surroundings for the 'dim, common populations.' And as

such creations cannot be accomplished without money, the State was entitled to exact from the individual such proportion of the cost as that individual ought, but was unwilling, to contribute of his own free will.

This is, I fancy, a fair account of the rise of Collectivism, or State Socialism, or whatever you choose to call it, during the later years of Queen Victoria's reign. Of course the new doctrine was frowned upon in the high places of politics. Unfortunately the men who sympathized most keenly with political freedom were the bond-slaves of the Dismal Science. In a winter of exceptional distress a Liberal President of the Local Government Board declined to issue a circular to the London Vestries suggesting work for the unemployed, because he thought the Political Economy Club would be shocked. In 1885 Mr. Gladstone (who had just been staying with Mr. Goschen) asked the present writer if it was true that Socialistic notions were spreading among the younger Liberals. I answered by asking another question—'Do you mean by "Socialism" the State doing for the individual what he ought to do for himself? Or do you mean, the State taking private property for public uses?' Mr. Gladstone replied, with indescribable emphasis, 'I mean both. But I reserve my worst Billingsgate for the latter.' As regards the former, he wrote in 1887 the words which have suggested this chapter: 'The business

of the last half-century has been in the main a process of setting free the individual man, that he may work out his vocation without wanton hindrance, as his Maker will have him do. If, instead of this, Government is to work out his vocation for him, I, for one, am not sanguine as to the result.' And in 1894, when he was leaving public life for ever, he wrote to me: 'I am thankful to have had a part in the emancipating labours of the last sixty years; but entirely uncertain how, had I now to begin my life, I could face the very different problems of the next sixty years. Of one thing I am, and always have been, convinced—it is not by the State that man can be regenerated and the terrible woes of this darkened world effectually dealt with.' Meanwhile a Tory Government had given us the London County Council, and ever since 1888 that body has been teaching us, by concrete example, the public services which can be rendered by a reasonable Collectivism. The example of London has spread far and wide, has been embodied in repeated legislation, and has resulted in bringing under the beneficent control of the State or the community whole tracts of human life which aforetime were desolated by individual greed.

It is true that just now we hear a little murmur of reaction. Some good young men, at Oxford and elsewhere, are trying, with the characteristic wrong-

headedness of youth, to restore the reign of the Manchester School. They glorify individual effort. They munch the exceedingly dry remainder-biscuit of commercialism and competition. They make pious pilgrimages to Mr. Cobden's grave; and even import the horrid jargon of Political Economy into the humaner letters of Oxford's beautiful culture. Those wistful misgivings about the undue extension of the State's prerogative which were natural enough in Mr. Gladstone at eighty seem strangely out of place in men who have got the Twentieth Century before them. To us, who occupy an intermediate station between the octogenarian Onlooker and the Young Lions, the cause of Collectivism seems to be the cause of Social Progress. It is the new and better Revolution.

IX

THE FAILURES OF DEMOCRACY

'Do you yourself think Democracy the best government and Universal Suffrage a success?'

'These are matters about which I rarely talk in society; they are like the doctrine of a personal God, of the future life, of revealed religion—subjects which one naturally reserves for private reflection. But, since you ask for my political creed, you shall have it. I believe in Democracy. I accept it. I will faithfully serve and defend it. I believe in it because it appears to me the inevitable consequence of what has gone before it. Democracy asserts the fact that the masses are now raised to a higher intelligence than formerly. All our civilization aims at this mark. We want to do what we can to help it. I myself want to see the result. I grant it is an experiment, but it is the only direction society can take that is worth its taking; the only conception of its duty large enough to satisfy its instincts; the only result that is worth an effort or a risk. Every other possible step is backward, and I do

not care to repeat the past. I am glad to see society grapple with issues in which no one can afford to be neutral.'

'And supposing your experiment fails? Suppose society destroys itself with universal suffrage, corruption, and communism?'

'Visit the observatory with me some evening and look at Sirius. Did you ever make the acquaintance of a fixed star? I believe astronomers reckon about twenty millions of them in sight, and an infinite possibility of invisible millions, each one of which is a sun, like ours, and may have satellites like our planet. Suppose you see one of these fixed stars suddenly increase in brightness, and are told that a satellite has fallen into it and is burning-up, its career finished and its capacities exhausted? Curious, is it not? But what does it matter? Just as much as the burning up of a moth at your candle.'

'I cannot get to the height of your philosophy. You are wandering among the infinites, and I am finite.'

'Not at all. But I have faith—not, perhaps, in the old dogmas, but in the new ones; faith in human nature, faith in science, faith in the survival of the fittest. Let us be true to our time. If our age is to be beaten, let us die in the ranks. If it is to be victorious, let us be first to lead the column.'

I have transcribed this remarkable piece of dialogue (as I have always thought it) from a forgotten novel, because it seems to express a misgiving which accounts for much in our present politics. I am not thinking of those who, from conviction or from prejudice, are frankly disbelievers in the democratic principle and avowedly seek salvation in the rule, by whatever method secured, of the best and the wisest. Nor am I thinking of the central mass of men, not confined to one political party, who are prepared to take things as they are and work them to the greatest advantage of the State. By these it is generally admitted that Democracy was the inevitable result of our political evolution; that it was bound to come, that it has come, that there is no use in kicking against it or grumbling at it; and that our business is to follow it whither it leads us, to make the best of it, and blindly trust the consequences. I am thinking of those who once were the convinced and enthusiastic upholders of the democratic principle; and when I mix with them I feel all round me an atmosphere of misgiving, such as that suggested in the dialogue from which I have quoted. It is a misgiving seldom articulate, and, if articulate at all, only uttered esoterically; but it is none the less real, and none the less paralyzing in its effects. It comes to this—Is Democracy fulfilling its theory and justifying the faith of its

disciples? Has it, as a matter of fact, produced those benefits which we expected from it? Does it show promise of greater fruitfulness in the time to come? Or is it destined, after being tried and found wanting, to make way for some other type of government which, though not ideally perfect, has been found by the experience of the world to be at any rate tolerable and workable?

It is impossible to avoid contrasting this temper, if I have rightly caught it, with the temper which prevailed thirty years ago. The democratic suffrage, created by the Reform Act of 1867, had been for some three years at work. The newly enfranchised class had shown itself worthy of its citizenship. The Liberal party was at the top of golden hours. It followed a leader who inspired enthusiasm, and it saw within its grasp a series of democratic reforms long desired and at length attainable. The French Empire had lately fallen, amid circumstances of horror and disgrace which seemed the appropriate punishment for the crime on which it had been built. At home the Crown, owing to causes which proved to be temporary, had lost much of its former popularity. English Republicanism, if not widely spread, was at least a tangible reality; and among politicians who were not Republicans there was a deep conviction that the forces which had swayed the past were played out, and

that the era of Government of the People by the People for the People had at length arrived, and was destined to last for ever. Timid men, admirers of the ancient ways, praisers of the past, admitted the fact while they deplored it; and the ardent and the sanguine, the genuine lovers of freedom and progress, gloried in what they believed to be the final and irreversible triumph of their cause. 'Before twenty years are over,' they said, 'the last king will have been strangled in the bowels of the last priest.' We all know how rudely these glowing dreams were shattered. The great law of reaction, though unperceived, was already at work, and, with slight variations of greater or less activity, has been operating from that time to this. It is common knowledge that whole classes of the community who were then among the most enthusiastic adherents of Progress have transferred their allegiance to the standard of Privilege. In fact the cause which in 1871 seemed to have the whole world at its feet is in 1901 defeated, discredited, and despised. That is bad enough; but if that were all, there would still be room for 'Hope and a renovation without end.' Political beliefs, like religious creeds, have a knack of rising from the dust of defeat and taking their conquerors captive. The mischief which I deplore seems to be of a different and a subtler kind. It is not that we have to reckon with

numerous, powerful, and victorious foes, but rather that our own friends, our closest allies—nay, even sometimes our very selves—are reopening questions long ago answered, reconsidering allegiances long ago settled, cross-examining old watchwords, picking holes in time-honoured flags.

Pre-eminently is this true with regard to Democracy. Thirty years ago it was an ideal which ardent and generous souls honestly worshipped. They saw in it the redress of all the grievances which had vexed the earth; the abolition of war, the inauguration of brotherhood, equal rights and equal chances, a millennial reign of justice, mercy, and peace. Democracy has now had its full fling for more than thirty years. It has not brought back the Golden Age; it has not precipitated the Millennium. It has sunk from the glorious altitude of a divine ideal to the humble station of a decent and fairly workable arrangement. Beyond all question the result has been disappointment and disillusionment even among the very elect, and to-day they are asking whether in pledging themselves long ago to Democracy they really were following a cunningly-devised fable, and whether the ideal which once they worshipped, and in which they still try to believe, will stand the test of experience and verify the promise of its prime.

A great master of the spiritual life used to lay it

down that 'everyone who is taking pains with his own soul will be careful to catechize himself in private, not only as to questions of conduct, but as to matters of faith and knowledge. What do I believe on this subject? Why do I believe it?' And, if we take the Soul in its wider sense, we shall not be less careful to catechize ourselves about the conceptions which lie at the very root of our citizenship, which colour our aspirations for our country and our race, and thereby determine our political action. It would be superfluous for a Liberal writing to Liberals to set forth the reasons why he and they originally swore themselves to the standard of Democracy. Though we are old and jaded and jaundiced and disillusioned, we have not forgotten the arguments which once seemed so cogent to head and heart, or the generous intuitions which outran argument and based the claim of Democracy on the bedrock of morality. All this is so essentially part of our mental and spiritual experience that there is no need to set it forth in words. Rather should we enquire why we find ourselves reconsidering our allegiance and deserting our first love. Why are we disappointed? Has Democracy failed? Or is it really we who have failed, with that dismallest of all failures—the loss of faith and hope?

X

THE HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY

I WROTE in my last chapter that political beliefs, like religious creeds, have a knack of rising from the dust of defeat and taking their conquerors captive. Now I re-write the sentence, and I lay stress on the word *Beliefs*. If our sentiment in favour of Democracy is a real belief, I anticipate its persistence, resurrection, and triumph. But if it is a mere opinion, however pious; or if it is only a lazy acquiescence in a passing phase of politics; or, still more, if it has been all along a dishonest attempt to make terms with a power which we believed to be stronger than ourselves but which in our hearts we dreaded and disliked—then assuredly it is doomed to dwindle and disappear. The opinion will be changed. The phase will pass. The fraud will be avowed and discarded when it has served its turn.

Do we, then, believe in Democracy? And if we do, why are we disappointed? And does our disappointment arise from circumstances which are fluc-

tuating and transitory, or from causes inherent in the very nature of the case? I will assume that the answer to the first of these questions is affirmative. I assume that some of us—though, I fear, a dwindling band—are still believers in the Democratic principle, and believe in it as men believe in their religious creed. But, granting this, why are we disappointed by the great experiment to which we had looked forward so longingly? And is that disappointment to be part of our permanent experience? The answers to these questions must be carefully pondered.

I suppose that we are disappointed partly because Democracy has achieved so little of its purpose, and partly because it has not produced a high type of public virtue. We used to believe that when once the great mass of our fellow-citizens had obtained control over the machine of State they would use it energetically and persistently in the creation of better moral and material surroundings for those who cannot help themselves. We were confident that Democracy meant peace, and that the politicians who under the older system had been able to shed blood like water for selfish or dynastic ends would henceforward be as impossible as Alexander or Napoleon. One of our favourite poets had told us long before that

> War is a game which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings would not play at,

and we believed that the enfranchised Democracy of England, wise in everything else, would be pre-eminently wise in this. We should beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks. Nation should not lift up sword against nation; neither should we learn war any more. Furthermore, we believed that venality and corruption, and insincere professions, and self-seeking policies would vanish before the searching light of the Democratic day. Everyone would be patriotic and everyone would be pure.

Now it must be frankly acknowledged that all these expectations have been ludicrously falsified. To begin with, Democracy has done very little of any kind. It seems unconscious of its power, or at any rate quite content to let that power lie habitually unused; and, on the rare occasions when it has consciously and definitely acted, its warmest admirers can scarcely say that it has acted on the right side. Plenty of reforms have been carried out since the Constitution has been Democratic, but Democracy has merely acquiesced in them. It has roused itself from its lethargy to defeat the Irish demand for self-government, to prevent interference with the liquor traffic, and to foment an unjust and ruinous war. Indeed, a passion for war-making seems to be the special characteristic of the English Democracy. Mr. Gladstone's assertion of the principle of international arbitration destroyed the Government

of 1868–1874, and to-day the Minister who beats the loudest war-drum can reckon on the most tumultuous support and the biggest majority.

And, disappointing as are the performances of Democracy, even more deeply so is the type of public character which it encourages. Have English voters ever been more venal than at the present hour? Has the influence of the long purse ever been more palpable than in the electioneering of to-day? A working man was contesting a small borough against the dominant influence of the local family. 'Fellow-workmen,' he cried, 'if you return me, I can only serve you politically. I can't give you any blankets; I can't give you any game;' whereupon the Voice from the Crowd exclaimed, 'Then you won't do here, old chap! You'd better try somewhere else.' And what the Voice said the Democracy thinks, though it may express its aspiration in less barbaric forms. We all remember that John Stuart Mill saw the ethical shortcomings of the English voter and was not afraid to rebuke them on the platform. Perhaps, therefore, the vitality of bribery and corruption ought not to have astounded or disappointed us. But, ethics apart, we believed in the intellectual acuteness of the Democracy, and made sure that it would intuitively penetrate imposture, and would be even brutally intolerant of plausibility and solemn humbug. Yet now is the heyday of the self-

advertizer, the charlatan, and the pretender—'And my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?'

So much for our disappointments. It remains to enquire whether they are in their nature permanent. Will Democracy always be indifferent to the cry of human suffering? Will it always disregard justice when separated from self-interest? Will it always delight in war? Will it always deliver itself up, a willing prey, to the unscrupulous self-seekers who exploit it? For my own part, I am conscious of only too much affinity to that deplorable family in the 'Pilgrim's Progress'—Mr. Despondency and his daughter Muchafraid. My natural tendency is to despond about the causes which I love best, and to be 'afraid where no fear is.' I am therefore the last man in the world to take an over-sanguine view of the prospects of Democracy, and yet my misgivings are corrected by the consideration that perhaps, after all, Democracy in England has never been fairly tried. I said that Democracy has had its full fling for more than thirty years. But this was too unguarded an expression. Our electoral law, which used, in Burke's phrase, to wrest the working man's rights from him by force, now 'shuffles them from him by chicane,' and much remains to be done before our system of representation is even theoretically perfect.

And even when the voting machinery is complete, something more than machinery is required to create that system of government which is properly called Democracy. We were warned fifty years ago to remember that Democracy means a government, not merely by numbers of isolated individuals, but by a Demos—by men accustomed to live in Demoi, or corporate bodies, and accustomed, therefore, to the self-control, obedience to law, and self-sacrificing public spirit without which a corporate body cannot exist. 'A Democracy of mere numbers is no Democracy, but a mere brute "arithmocracy," which is certain to degenerate into an "othlocracy," or government by the mob, in which the numbers have no real share; an oligarchy of the fiercest, the noisiest, the rashest, and the most shameless, which is surely swallowed up, either by a despotism, as in France, or, as in Athens, by utter national ruin and hopeless slavery to a foreign invader.' If this is true, Democracy has never yet been fairly tried in England, and the best hope for the Democratic cause is that men should learn the lessons of Imperial citizenship in the school of local self-government. The example of London shows us that men may be keen about local affairs while they are still profoundly indifferent to Imperial politics. The institutions of local self-government have been brought to the very doors of the citizen, both in town and country.

As electors to or as members of those institutions, Englishmen can learn, like Athenians, to act in 'Demoi,' to cultivate the spirit of justice and of mercy, to protect the weak and the helpless, to avoid needless strife, and to turn a deaf ear to the importunities of impostors. Lessons so learned in the narrow area of local life may in good time be applied to the higher and deeper problems of Imperial government. Democracy, having been 'faithful over a few things,' may yet be made 'ruler over many.'

XI

MONARCHY: 1760-1820

FROM Democracy to Monarchy may seem an abrupt transition, and yet it is absolutely the most natural. Exactly in proportion as Democracy decays or slackens, Monarchy renews its youth and extends its power. A working alliance between the two forces was the dream of Lord Beaconsfield's life, and the very fact that he was so absolutely an alien gave him a peculiarly clear insight into our political tendencies. By blood, temperament, and tradition he was detached from the blinding influences of party. In his youth he saw visions and dreamed dreams. Practical people, plain men, lovers of common-sense and commonplace, thought him a mere dreamer. But, whereas their calculations generally miscarried, his dreams had a knack of coming true. His favourite formula of 'The Monarch and the Multitude' stands no longer for a joke or a fantasy, but represents a political fact of visible and increasing importance. Our actual Constitution has been called 'a veiled Republic' and

'a Kingly Commonwealth.' It might perhaps be more truly described as an Elective Monarchy. It is as certain as anything not proved can be that the voters of Great Britain would have chosen the Prince of Wales to succeed to his mother's throne; but the Act of Settlement itself would scarcely avail to secure the undisputed succession of a thoroughly unpopular and distrusted prince. The Monarchy and the Democracy, then, according to my view, constitute an Imperial partnership, and just in proportion as the one partner withdraws from active participation in the affairs of the concern the influence of the other increases. I have already discussed the one—Democracy—as it promised to be and as it is. Now I must say a word about the other.

In discussing the past and present influence of the Crown I am not going to refurbish Macaulay and Green, nor to consult the lively oracles of Erskine May and Taswell-Langmead. For the past I shall rely almost entirely on oral tradition derived from people to whom 'the old King' meant George III, and who had never quite lost the habit of referring to George IV as the Prince Regent. The present—a topic which obviously demands a good deal of circumspection—must be dealt with as it arises.

George III, as we all know, was very effectively a Monarch. 'George, be King' was a maternal admonition which, to do him justice, he strove to

obey. Of course his political victories were obtained over Ministers and Parliaments, for there was no 'Democracy' to be reckoned with, but only what Burke urbanely called 'the swinish multitude' of unenfranchised citizens. With that multitude he was strangely popular; partly because, in happy contrast to his immediate predecessors, he was thoroughly English; partly because he was good-natured, affable, and easy of access; partly because he was believed to be religious and was known to excel in the domestic virtues; partly because he lived very long. The tragic fate which clouded his later years obscured the memory of his public errors, and drew pity even from those who could not profess respect. The popularity of George IV was of a very different kind, but that it was a reality I do not doubt. Thackeray's caricature has perverted our view, and has left the impression of a character not only contemptible, but also repulsive. That is by no means the tradition which I have received from those who knew and served George IV as Prince Regent or as King. He was magnificent, sumptuous, stately; and those qualities, as we have lately seen, attract the multitude. His manner, when he chose, could be perfection—majestic and yet benignant, chivalrous with women, playful with children, gracious and cordial with men. These traditions I have from one who attended his children's parties at

Brighton, officiated at his Coronation, and danced at his Court. Lord Aberdeen (1784–1860), who had served George IV in confidential office, described him thus: 'He was as selfish as anyone could be. But all Royal people are; they all believe that the world was made for them. He could do kind things; he was always very kind to me. . . . He was certainly a Sybarite, but his faults were exaggerated. He was to the full as true a man as his father. He would embrace you, kiss you—seized on the Duke of Wellington and kissed him. He certainly could be the most polished of gentlemen, or the exact opposite.' Of the 'exact opposite' let one instance suffice. Lord Charles Russell (1807–1894) had just received his first commission in the Blues, and was commanded, with the rest of his regiment, to a full-dress ball at Carlton House. Unluckily for his peace of mind, the young subaltern dressed at his father's house, and, not being used to the splendid paraphernalia of the 'Blues' uniform, he omitted to put on his 'aiguillette.' Arrived at the Palace, the guests before they could enter the ballroom had to advance in single file along a corridor in which the old King, bewigged and bestarred, was seated on a sofa. When the hapless youth who lacked the aiguillette approached the presence, he heard a very high voice exclaim, 'Who is this d——d fellow?' Retreat was impossible, and there was nothing for it

but to shuffle on and try to pass the King without further rebuke. Not a bit of it. As he neared the sofa the King exclaimed, 'Good evening, sir; I suppose you are the regimental doctor' (for non-combatants do not wear aiguillettes); and the imperfectly accoutred youth wished that the earth would open and swallow him up alive. Yet the victim of this Royal outrage always declared that the perpetrator of it, when he chose, was 'every inch a King;' and that he had only to show his face on any public occasion to be greeted with tumults of applause, which drowned the rival cries of 'George, where's your wife?' His wanton extravagances had imposed heavy burdens on the national purse. (Did we not pay £10,000 for his gold punch-bowl?) He lived the life of an Oriental potentate in a peculiarly rapacious harem. Yet the popular complaint against him was, not that he withstood reform, or wasted public money, or disregarded the Decalogue, but that he did not oftener allow his loyal subjects the pleasure of gazing on his regal countenance.

> The Dandy of Sixty, who bows with a grace,
> And has taste in wigs, collars, cuirasses, and lace;
> Who to tricksters and fools leaves the State and its treasure,
> And while Britain's in tears, sails about at his pleasure.

He might remain buried from year's end to year's end in the scandalous privacy of 'The Pavilion' or 'The

Cottage.' Reformers might remonstrate, and economists growl, and moralists denounce; but the moment the majestic Braham stood forth upon a public platform and sang the first bars of 'God Save the King,' the whole audience rose in loyal enthusiasm, and the sentimental portion burst into maudlin tears. Lord Shaftesbury, noting in his diary for 1849 the attempt of Hamilton upon Queen Victoria's life, remarks: 'The profligate George IV passed through a life of selfishness and sin without a single proved attempt to take it. This mild and virtuous young woman has four times already been exposed to imminent peril.'

The story that George IV kept out of sight because he was mad originated, no doubt, in the remembrance of his father's fate; but it was sedulously fostered for political objects, by those who wished to discount the value of his besotted resistance to constitutional change. The truth was touched with characteristic dexterity by Lord Beaconsfield in 'Lothair:' 'King George IV believed that he was at the battle of Waterloo, and indeed commanded there, and his friends were a little alarmed; but Knighton, who was a sensible man, said: "His Majesty has only to leave off curaçoa and rest assured he will gain no more victories."' In truth, the King's eccentricities were only those which are engendered by an unbounded self-indulgence; and the moment that it became necessary to hoodwink Parliament, or deceive a friend, or frustrate a Minister, or

defeat a policy, his naturally fine abilities rallied to the call of self-interest, and the Sybarite became a statesman whom Machiavelli's Prince might have been proud to call brother. 'George IV was indolent,' said one who had been his Foreign Secretary; 'but he always read important papers, especially foreign affairs. He would not wade through long-winded colonial papers. But that is always the case; the foreign affairs are what interest them—they concern the Family of Princes.'

It would carry me beyond due limits if I were to trace in detail either the private or the public misconduct of this picturesque but erring potentate. Besides, we have whole libraries of memoirs and journals to instruct us; the testimony of that ever-vigilant Clerk of the Council, Charles Greville; and, as I said at the outset, the oral tradition of eye-witnesses whom we ourselves have known. The conclusion of the whole matter may be briefly stated. George IV was insensible to honour and incapable of veracity; but he knew how to make himself pleasant, and therefore he succeeded where better men failed. Dishonesty proved to be the best policy. He kept his throne secure through a period of political upheaval; and when that result was attained, we may without uncharity assume that he did not suffer his Royal dreams to be disturbed by the thought of what would happen to his successor.

XII

MONARCHY: 1820-1837

A LADY who was born in 1792 and died in 1883 told me that one of the advantages of living to be very old was that one came to see that things which had seemed to be disasters were really blessings. 'For instance,' she said, 'when Princess Charlotte died the whole nation was plunged into grief. And now we have lived to know that she was a rantipole, and that it was the greatest mercy that she never came to the Throne.' The ill-starred Princess who was thus summarily dismissed by my nonagenarian friend died in 1817, and those who are interested in her mysterious story may peruse it in Lady Anne Hamilton's 'Secret History of the Court of England.' Through her death the heirship to the Throne devolved on King George IV's next brother, Frederick, Duke of York, of whom Mr. Goldwin Smith has genially observed that the 'only meritorious action of his life was that he once risked it in a duel.' The Duke died without issue in 1827, and his next brother, William, Duke of

Clarence, suddenly stepped from obscurity into prominence as heir-presumptive to the Crown. He had been Burns's 'Young, royal Tarry Breeks,' and he enjoyed some measure of that popularity which in England is always bestowed upon a sailor. Canning, in a fit of fantastic revivalism, had recreated for him the office of Lord High Admiral, and he had comported himself so oddly in it that he was soon replaced by a more prosaic Board of Admiralty. After his retirement from the Navy he had lived in seclusion at Bushey Park, married to a virtuous but unpopular princess and surrounded by a morganatic family whose mother had been the celebrated Mrs. Jordan. He cultivated the manners of the bluff seaman, discarded not only pomp but dignity, trotted about London with a cotton umbrella, smacked his seafaring comrades on the back, and decorated his conversation with a royal allowance of customary oaths.

Tom Moore in 'The Twopenny Post-bag' had thus described the breakfast-table of King George IV:

> On one side lay unread Petitions;
> On t'other, Hints from five Physicians.
> *Here*, tradesmen's bills, official papers,
> Notes from my Lady, drams for vapours;
> *There*, plans of saddles, tea and toast,
> Death-warrants, and the *Morning Post*.

It is, as I said in my last chapter, no breach of charity to assume that this luxurious repose was untroubled

by any anxious speculations about the personal or dynastic prospects of so incongruous a successor. But, alas! even the most selfish of us cannot live for ever, and George the Magnificent made way for his very unmagnificent brother on June 26, 1830. William IV very soon gave a taste of his quality. The amiable Greville, whose office brought him into close-quarters with the King, says that, coming to the Throne at the mature age of sixty-five, he was so excited by the exaltation that he nearly went mad, and distinguished himself by a thousand extravagances of language and conduct, to the alarm or amusement of all who witnessed his strange feats; 'and though he was shortly afterwards sobered down into more becoming habits, he always continued to be something of a blackguard and something more of a buffoon.' In illustration of this I have been told that after his first Drawing Room he loudly complained that the paint on the faces of the older ladies had made his regal lips stick together. His peculiar passion was for speech-making, and he let slip no opportunity, public or private, of airing his extemporaneous eloquence. Archbishop Longley left it on record that when he did homage on his appointment to the See of Ripon, the King suddenly addressed him in a loud voice thus: 'Bishop of Ripon, I charge you as you shall answer before Almighty God, that you never by word or deed

give encouragement to those d——d Whigs, who would upset the Church of England.'

Coming to the Throne with the sound principles implied in this allocution, it was King William's misfortune to find himself confronted by the rising passion for Parliamentary Reform. Very imperfectly equipped, both in the way of intellect and of knowledge, he found the popular cause represented by the commanding character and stately eloquence of Grey, the fiery temper of Durham, the ungovernable vehemence of Brougham, and the constitutional lore of Russell—truly a formidable combination. The Duke of Wellington was still Prime Minister, and the new King, although the Duke had deprived him of the office of Lord High Admiral only two years before, manifested no resentment, but treated him with all possible confidence and respect. The King probably felt that the Hero of Waterloo was the only man in public life strong enough to beat the Reformers. The popular forces, however, were too strong even for the Victor of a Hundred Fights, and before the year was out Lord Grey and his friends were in office, pledged to Parliamentary Reform.

Then appeared a curious change in the King's attitude towards the question of the hour, if not in his private sentiments concerning it. It may be that he believed it to be his constitutional duty to support his Ministers; but constitutional principles, as we under-

stand them, were not so fully developed in 1830 as to justify this theory. It is more probable that the King's new advisers persuaded him that he could win a wide popularity by being or seeming friendly to Reform. Brougham, who when it served his turn could fawn as well as bully, was exactly the man to work this suggestion for all it was worth; but, by whatever methods brought about, the result was for the moment highly satisfactory to the Whigs. The people got it into their heads that despotism and coercion had died with George IV. William was the 'Patriot King,' who loved his people and desired to see them free. His Ministers had his entire confidence, and he and they together would soon trample down the resisting forces of Toryism and tyranny. The great measure on which so many and such fallacious hopes were built was introduced into the House of Commons on March 1, 1831, and the tradition which I have received from the Whigs who promoted it is that if the Tories had plucked up courage to throw it out on the First Reading the cause of Reform would have been retarded for a generation. But more prudent, or more cowardly, counsels prevailed. The Bill went forward to a Second Reading, when it was carried by one vote. Lord John Russell, in his delighted surprise, wrote: 'If we have the King with us another fortnight we shall be sure of our game.' This was

over-sanguine. Sure of their game the Ministers were not, for directly afterwards they were beaten in Committee; but they still 'had the King with them.' When William IV saw that the Bill was thrown out, he consented to an instant dissolution, and went down to the House of Lords at an hour's notice to terminate an inconvenient debate by prorogation. The General Election resulted in an unmistakable victory for Reform, which was met by an equally unmistakable determination of the Tories to defeat it. The new Reform Bill, triumphant in the Commons, was thrown out in the House of Lords by 41. Never since 1688 had public feeling run so high. The country was on the verge of civil war, and the King naturally shrank back alarmed from the apparent consequences of the policy which he had been induced to support. He scolded Lord John Russell for describing the vote of the Lords as 'the whisper of a faction,' and from that time on his relations with his Ministers became strained and uncomfortable. But he was in the grip of forces too strong for him. A third Reform Bill was introduced; and when it in turn was threatened with destruction by the Lords, King William yielded to overmastering pressure and consented to create as many peers as would carry the Bill. 'Who's "Silly Billy" now?' was the delighted exclamation of his cousin William, Duke of Gloucester, who down

to this eventful day had borne that derogatory nickname.

The remainder of King William's life was increasingly embittered by his imperfect sympathy with the Ministers, from whom he could not escape. Having, by a summary exercise of the Royal prerogative, dismissed them in 1834, he was forced by the result of the General Election to take them back again in 1835, and all the domestic influences of the Palace were employed to make the situation intolerable. Yet Sydney Smith, than whom no one was ever less inclined to flatter kings, has left it on record that 'the late Monarch was sincere and honest in his political relations; he put his trust really where he put his trust ostensibly, and did not attempt to undermine by secret means those to whom he trusted publicly the conduct of affairs.' And this is no mean tribute from the staunchest of Whigs to a King who had once been a Whig and had lived to quarrel with Whiggery.

XIII

MONARCHY: 1837-1840

'HARK! it tolls! All is over. The great bell of the metropolitan cathedral announces the death of the last son of George the Third who will ever reign in England. He was a good man: with feelings and sympathies; deficient in culture rather than in ability; with a sense of duty; and with something of the conception of what should be the character of an English monarch. Peace to his manes! We are summoned to a different scene.

'In a palace in a garden—not in a haughty keep, proud with the fame but dark with the violence of ages; not in a regal pile, bright with the splendour but soiled with the intrigues of Courts and factions—in a palace in a garden, meet scene for youth and innocence and beauty, came the voice which told the maiden that she must ascend her Throne.'

Critics have always abused Lord Beaconsfield's style, and indeed it is remarkable that, though, as Lord Sherbrooke said, 'English was, after all, his

native language,' he never succeeded in mastering the rules of syntax, and never, to the end of a long life, lost his boyish love of purple patches. But I maintain, in defiance of the critics, that his style was good because it was individual. It resembled nothing that had ever been written before. It abounded in vigour, colour, and picturesqueness; and its effect was constantly heightened by touches of dramatic contrast. So, I think, the passage which I have just cited suggests with consummate art the transition from the old order to the new. Certainly the estimate of William IV is considerably higher than that which was given in my last chapter. But it must be borne in mind that when he wrote those words Benjamin Disraeli was an eager aspirant after political office, and Queen Victoria was more likely to be pleased by praise than by abuse of the good-natured old uncle whom she succeeded on the Throne.

The free-and-easiness of the English Court went out with William IV, and the most determined admirers of the past could scarcely regret it. Nobody could wish to recall the type of pleasantry, the style of conversation, or the convivial habits, recorded by Madame D'Arblay and Mrs. Delany. With a young lady on the throne, the necessity of a severe decorum was recognized by even the most boisterous spirits. Mr. Gladstone used to say that the Queen's accession

had abolished swearing. It was impossible even for Lord Melbourne, who habitually 'assumed everyone and everything to be d——d,' to swear in her presence, and the self-control thus enforced became a habit. Inebriety, which had been a mere incident of good-fellowship in the festive circles of George and William, would have been an outrage on decency at the table of a Queen. So careful were her Ministers that her susceptibilities should not be shocked, that they promptly abolished the ancient practice by which the sentences in capital cases passed at the Old Bailey were submitted to the Sovereign in person. People of the highest station were made to feel that character was an essential condition of admission to the Queen's presence; and a social tragedy not yet forgotten commemorates the even excessive zeal with which the Queen's friends sought to shield her from every contaminating breath.

In June 1837 the vivid interest of the political situation centred in the unknown personality of the girl-Queen. Everyone had known all about George IV and William IV—their habits, tastes, opinions, and desires—long before they came to the Throne; but about Queen Victoria nobody knew anything. Even now, when abundant light has been thrown by her own memoirs and journals on her early years, we only know that she was strictly, even severely, brought

up, carefully taught, and kept in an almost complete seclusion. She had no contact with political party—least of all, one might say, with the party of Freedom and Progress; for neither the Duchess of Kent nor Sir John Conroy, neither Baroness Lehzen nor Dr. Davys—the quartet who ruled her youth—was likely to turn the Princess's early sympathies towards Liberalism. But it chanced that when she ascended the Throne the Prime Minister was the fascinating Melbourne; a sorry politician indeed, but a man of attractive gifts and infinite resource; easy, courteous, playful, and high-bred; by common consent, the most brilliant figure in the most brilliant society of the time. Heretofore he had been indolent to the point of lethargy; but now he suddenly rose to the height of his new duties, and applied himself with a vigour which astonished his friends to the task of guiding and protecting the girl-Queen. There can be no doubt that the best part of his nature was aroused by the nature of his task; but it is not uncharitable to surmise that he also saw a unique opportunity of promoting the interests of that political party to which he was sincerely, though languidly, attached. His first step was to fill the Queen's Household with ladies on whose loyalty to Whiggism he could confidently rely. The beautiful and majestic Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, became Mistress of the Robes;

and the very names of Lady Lansdowne, Lady Tavistock, Lady Durham, and Lady Portman were enough to guarantee the political soundness of the Queen's immediate surroundings.

Melbourne's next step was to establish himself as a permanent inmate at Windsor Castle. 'Month after month he remains here, submitting to the daily routine. Of all men he appeared to be the last to be broken in to the trammels of a Court, and never was such a revolution seen in anyone's occupations and habits. Instead of indolently sprawling in all the attitudes of luxurious ease, he is always sitting bolt upright. His free and easy language interlarded with "damns" is carefully guarded and regulated with the strictest propriety, and he has exchanged the good talk of Holland House for the trivial, laboured, and wearisome inanities of the Royal circle.' So wrote the watchful and dispassionate Greville.

A furious Tory, Lord Londonderry, reported that one of the Whig Ministers had said 'he would be d——d if they ever would resign, and that Melbourne knew how to please a woman much better than Peel.' Another Tory, the Duke of Buckingham, wrote that 'Melbourne shortly became all-powerful in the Palace.' Bishop Wilberforce, who went everywhere and noticed everything, wrote that Melbourne's behaviour to the Queen was perfect—'The fullest attentive deference of

the subject, with a subdued air of "your father's friend," which was quite fascinating.' This well-planned campaign of social agreeableness secured the end for which it was designed, and its results were made manifest at the first political crisis which arose after the Queen's accession.

Lord John Russell used to relate that when the Queen reinstated the Whigs in the offices which they had vacated in 1839 she said: 'I have stood by you, and now you must stand by me.' Reviewing that crisis in after years, Lord Beaconsfield condemned Sir Robert Peel for having declined to form a Government; and the grounds on which he based his condemnation illustrate, with curious frankness, his own theory about the function of Monarchy in the English Constitution. He begins with the proposition that ever since 1688 the Royal prerogative had, 'unfortunately for the rights and liberties and social welfare of the people,' been more or less oppressed. In the heat of Parliamentary faction which prevailed after 1831 that prerogative had waned fainter and fainter; the events of 1839 gave an opportunity of reviving it. A youthful Princess was on the Throne, whose appearance touched the imagination, and to whom her people were inclined to ascribe something of that decision of character which becomes those born to command. Now was the moment to restore that

exercise of the regal authority, 'the usurpation of which had entailed on the people of England so much suffering and so much degradation.' It was unfortunate that the leader of the Tory party should have begun his career as Minister under Victoria by an unseemly contrariety to the personal wishes of the Queen. The reaction of public opinion, disgusted with years of Parliamentary tumult and incoherent legislation; the balanced state of political parties; the personal character of the Sovereign—all these were causes which intimated that a movement in favour of prerogative was at hand. 'The leader of the Tory party should have vindicated his natural position and availed himself of the gracious occasion.'

When these words were published they probably seemed to all the plain men and level-headed people the merest midsummer madness. A theory had grown up that the functions of the Sovereign were purely social and ceremonial. The political power of the Crown was believed to be as extinct as the dodo. The notion of reviving in the second half of the nineteenth century the personal exercise of the Royal prerogative was only the romantic figment of an exuberant and exotic imagination. Presently I shall endeavour to trace the processes by which the figment was translated into fact, and the concurrent causes which contributed to the result.

XIV

MONARCHY: 1840-1900

'THE part sustained by the Monarch in the system of this extended Empire still remains a great matter, and not a small one.' This was Mr. Gladstone's deliberate verdict, recorded in 1875; and he expanded it with great fulness of detail in an article called 'Kin Beyond Sea' which he contributed to the 'North American Review' in 1878. In the forties—the heyday of the ten-pound householder and the middle class—the people who prided themselves on common-sense habitually spoke of the Royal prerogative as an antiquarian curiosity. It was true that within very recent memory King William IV had dismissed his Whig Ministers. But it was commonly believed that Lord Melbourne, sick of a difficult task, had rather courted relief; and certainly the ten-pounders, when the General Election gave them the opportunity of speaking, restored the dismissed Ministry to power. Again, in the 'Bedchamber Plot' of 1839, though the published correspondence represented the young Queen as acting on

her own responsibility, it was pretty well known that Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell were behind the scenes and guided the hand which held the pen. Even in the much acuter crisis of 1851, when Lord John Russell dismissed Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office, the dismissal appeared to the world as an act of the Prime Minister alone, and the general public knew nothing of the all-important part which the Queen had played in it. When Palmerston was reproached by his friends for not having laid before the public a full history of the transactions which led to his dismissal, he justified his reticence on the express ground that he wished to shield the Queen.

So everything combined to encourage the Man in the Street in his favourite delusion that the Royal prerogative was extinct, and that the office of the Sovereign was limited to a formal acquiescence in measures decided by the Ministry. That delusion was the characteristic belief of middle-class Liberalism, and was held with unwavering faith by that great mass of people who are entirely out of contact with the machine of government. But those who had to work the machine knew better; and, though in old days it was not thought discreet to talk publicly of the part played by the Queen in politics, of late years statesmen have learned greater freedom of speech, and

Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, and Mr. Balfour have borne public and repeated testimony to the reality of the part which Her Majesty played. Some have even affirmed that the power of the Crown is a growing factor in our polity. A certain masterfulness (if such a word can be applied to a lady) was, as we have already seen, noted in Queen Victoria from the time of her accession. The almost paternal relation with her which Lord Melbourne established, enabled him to have things pretty much his own way. Sir Robert Peel was less of a favourite. His shyness, stiffness, and social awkwardness made him an uncomfortable courtier. 'I have no small talk,' said the Duke of Wellington, 'and Peel has no manners.' But Peel very early succeeded in winning the complete confidence of Prince Albert, and a statesman whom the Prince trusted could be sure of his ground with the Queen. The relation of the Queen and the Prince to Lord John Russell is less easy to describe. Lord John was not much of a favourite at Court. 'He would be better company if he had any other subject besides the Revolution of 1688 and himself' was a Royal but unjust comment on his conversation. His absolute straightforwardness could never be really acceptable in an atmosphere thick with flattery and toadyism, and his sturdy devotion to popular and Parliamentary government accorded ill with the

Teutonic theories of kingcraft which Prince Albert cultivated.

But still he was Prime Minister, and the Queen knew that her constitutional duty transcended all questions of personal liking; and so all might have gone well and smoothly had it not been for the disturbing influence of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. Him the Queen and the Prince cordially disliked. In spite of his titular rank and social success, he had a good deal of Irish vulgarity. His private life was not irreproachable. His whole tone was flippant and bumptious. In addition to all this, he was a man of imperious will and masterful habits. He framed his own course and pursued his own policies, and would take no orders either from Sovereign or from Premier. The Queen and the Prince were perpetually urging Lord John Russell to coerce his unruly colleague, and the unruly colleague proved a very difficult subject for coercion. In 1850 the Queen signified her commands to the Foreign Secretary in a memorandum which afterwards became famous:

'The Queen requires, first, that Lord Palmerston will distinctly state what he proposes in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she is giving her Royal sanction. Secondly, having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister.

Such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister.'

Undeterred by this threat, Palmerston pursued his independent way until he committed his crowning indiscretion by expressing approval of the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851. The Queen had been rightly anxious that no word should be said which would imply that the English Government approved of what had been done in Paris. Palmerston's contumacy was the last straw, and he was, at the Queen's instance, dismissed from the Foreign Office at Christmas 1851. The next year brought an event which had an important bearing on the evolution of the personal prerogative. Benjamin Disraeli took office for the first time, as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Down to that period he had been disliked and mistrusted at Court, and it was even said that the Queen desired that, when he joined Lord Derby's Government, he should not take an office which would require him to act as Minister in attendance on her at Balmoral. But as soon as he set foot within the charmed circle he applied all the resources of his genius to the task of disarming suspicion and attracting the good-will of the Queen and the Prince. In the course of years he succeeded in acquiring an influence at Court such

as no one since Melbourne had exercised, and that influence was consistently directed towards the re-assertion of the Royal prerogative. In his political novels, which conveyed his deepest thoughts in the convenient form of fiction, he had extolled as the ideal of government an alliance between 'the Monarch and the Multitude.' He had poured scorn on 'the fatal drollery of representative institutions.' He had glorified the Queen's greatness as an Oriental Sovereign, free, so far as her Indian Empire was concerned, from 'the embarrassment of her Chambers.' He had a long time to wait before he attained the realization of his early dreams. He had to outlive Palmerston, who, in spite of the Court's dislike, was made all-powerful by the election of 1859. He had to endure the five years of Mr. Gladstone's first Administration. But in 1874 his opportunity arrived, and the use which he made of it can be read in those trenchant essays on 'The Crown and the Cabinet' which bore the name of 'Verax' on their title-page.

The 'Quarterly Review' for April 1901 contained a remarkable paper on Queen Victoria, inspired by one who had known her well. The author testified to the minute and unflagging care with which the Queen supervised the daily duties of government, and also to the firmness with which she believed in her

divinely-given right to rule. In the 'Life' of Archbishop Tait we see the Queen using her powers with great skill and wisdom to avert a conflict between the two Houses of Parliament over the Irish Church in 1869. A similar intervention saved a constitutional deadlock over the Franchise Bill of 1884. The Queen's private letters, made public in these later years with rather injudicious freedom, display the active part which she took in all the transactions about General Gordon. Everyone remembers how a politician who had once professed Republicanism was made to eat the leek in public before he could be admitted to the Cabinet. The Queen's resolution to exclude another of like opinions was common knowledge in 1892.

But, after all, these are minor exercises of the Royal prerogative. It is on the downfall of a Ministry that, in Mr. Gladstone's words, 'the whole power of the State returns into the Royal hands.' A friend of mine once asked Queen Victoria if when a Prime Minister resigned he named his successor. 'Not unless I ask him to,' was Her Majesty's significant reply. It is for the Sovereign, and the Sovereign alone, to decide at these supreme crises of public life which statesman most perfectly represents the victorious forces of the hour. That Queen Victoria had what Lamb called 'an imperfect sympathy' with Mr.

Gladstone is sufficiently well known. The origin of the dislike is not very clear. The writer in the 'Quarterly Review' attributed it to Mr. Gladstone's tendency to overwork the Queen with business which, in her view, he ought to have transacted himself. But be this as it may, it is certain that the estrangement between Her Majesty and her ex-Premier came to a head during the prominence of the Eastern Question in 1876–1879. Lord Beaconsfield was then at the height of his power—*persona gratissima* at Court and full of Imperial and military bombast. Mr. Gladstone frankly owned that he had devoted all his power to 'counter-working the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield.' To attack the idol of the Court was at that conjuncture a flat blasphemy nearly equal to attacking the Court itself. To the astonishment of society, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were not invited to the wedding of the Duke of Connaught in 1879. This was a public snub which could scarcely be misunderstood; but an even more remarkable rebuke was administered behind the scenes. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had been in the habit of paying frequent visits to the late Dean Wellesley at the Deanery at Windsor, and the habit was continued during the long struggle over the Eastern Question. An Illustrious Personage wrote to the Dean suggesting that, as Mr. Gladstone was engaged in violent attacks upon the Government, it might be

better if his visits to the Deanery were discontinued. 'Whereupon,' said the stout old Dean, Wellington's nephew and counterpart, 'I wrote her a tickler.' Imagination boggles at the thought.

At Easter 1880, the great issue between Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone was submitted to the judgment of the nation. The Queen went abroad, comfortable in Lord Beaconsfield's assurance that the election would give him a fresh lease of power. When the dismal truth that Mr. Gladstone had a majority of a hundred was known, Her Majesty came home and Lord Beaconsfield resigned. Then political excitement became intense. Lord Hartington was no doubt the titular leader of the Liberal party, and a certain section of Moderate Liberals were desperately anxious that he should become Prime Minister; but the militant and victorious element in the party would have no chief but Mr. Gladstone. Yet his distastefulness to the Court was common knowledge, and I remember being assured by one who ought to have known that 'the Queen wouldn't speak to him.' In strict accordance with constitutional rule, Her Majesty sent to Lord Hartington, and not merely requested but implored him to form an Administration. He replied that a Liberal Administration with Mr. Gladstone as the Candid Friend just outside it would be a practical impossibility.

'But are you sure Mr. Gladstone wouldn't serve under you?'

'I can't say I am sure he wouldn't, ma'am, for I have never ventured to ask him.'

'Now I beg you will ask him, and come back and let me know what he says.'

This command Lord Hartington, as in duty bound, obeyed. Of course the answer was what he had anticipated. Next day he went back to Windsor, taking Lord Granville with him. Both statesmen assured the Queen that Mr. Gladstone was the only possible Prime Minister, and that evening he kissed hands. It was a supreme instance of constitutional propriety triumphing over personal distastes and even political convictions.

XV

MONARCHY: 1901

On November 12, 1841, Bishop Wilberforce wrote in his Diary: 'The Prince showed me the young Duke of Cornwall asleep in his bassinet, and a very fine child he is.' This is, I think, our first glimpse of His Most Gracious Majesty King Edward VII, who, born Duke of Cornwall on November 9, 1841, was created Prince of Wales on the 8th of the following December. Lady Lyttelton, who was governess to the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal, used to describe the Prince as a very good, gentle, affectionate little boy. According to the harsh usage then prevalent in Royal circles, he was taken when quite a child from female care and placed under tutors and governors; and Lady Lyttelton used to tell how, meeting her in the corridor soon after their separation, he pointed to the door of his former schoolroom and said, with pretty pathos, 'Ah! those happy days.' Queen Victoria's books revealed the scrupulous and anxious care with which she and the Prince Consort trained their eldest

son for the high duties which awaited him. It had been their orignal wish to secure Samuel Wilberforce (then in his Evangelical phase) as tutor, but his elevation to the episcopate interfered with this design, and in 1846, after a conversation at Osborne, Wilberforce wrote: 'It will be two more years before a tutor will be appointed, and they have begged me to be looking about for the fit man. It will not *certainly* be a clergyman, though if they can find a clergyman who in other respects is quite fit they will prefer his being so.' As a matter of fact, some of the Prince's tutors were clergymen and some were laymen, but his religious training was entrusted to Dean Wellesley, and that part of his education which consisted in teaching him the duties of constitutional kingship was conducted by the Queen and the Prince Consort. In 1855 Baron Stockmar, describing the Royal children, said: 'The Prince of Wales is the strongest of all. He can bear great fatigue. He takes most after his father's family.' Great care was taken to train him in all such bodily activities as riding and swimming, and he was provided with companions of suitable age, tastes, and habits. The present Lord Halifax, then 'Charlie Wood,' was constantly summoned from Eton to play cricket with the Prince at Windsor, and the friendship thus begun was cemented at Oxford. There a special class was formed for the instruction of the

Prince in Modern History, and the lectures came down to the Revolution of 1688. Just at that stage the Prince was transferred from Oxford to Cambridge, where a similar class was formed for him under the direction of Charles Kingsley, then Professor of Modern History. The Prince Consort drew up a careful syllabus of instruction for the Professor's guidance, and the Professor discreetly asked at what year in the eighteenth century he had better close his course. It is a pity that the answer is not preserved, for there is something piquant in the thought of 'Parson Lot' lecturing the Heir-Apparent on the constitutional system of Great Britain or the causes which produced the French Revolution.

The death of the Prince Consort at Christmas 1861 produced a sudden and a very important change in the life of the Heir-Apparent. It deprived him of a strict and wise control just at the moment when he most needed it, and by causing the Queen's retirement from public view it cast upon him a heavy burden of social and ceremonial business. For just thirty-eight years he has lived incessantly in the public eye, and, aided by the most beautiful and most gracious of Princesses, has played his great part with a tact akin to genius. To say that he has never been exposed to criticism would of course be untrue, but this is not the time or the place to revive it. Dr. Liddon told me

that he once received a letter charging him with unfaithfulness to his duty because he did not rebuke the Prince from the pulpit of St. Paul's. Liddon replied that he had no reason to suppose that the Prince was one of his congregation, and that a sermon, to be useful, should be addressed to the duties and difficulties of those who heard it. But it is a long time since the last note of criticism was sounded, and its place has been taken by universal eulogy. '*Omne tulit punctum* and all that kind of thing,' said Mr. Casaubon. I firmly believe that if we had been at liberty to elect a successor to Queen Victoria, King Edward would have polled every vote.

I have spoken in previous chapters about Monarchy as it was under George IV, William IV, and Queen Victoria. Is it permissible to prognosticate? If so, I will venture to foretell some of the attributes of Monarchy in the reign which has so lately begun:

(1) It will be a popular Monarchy. In a State where the Sovereign instinctively and always does 'the right thing,' the Throne grows daily stronger in the good-will of a fascinated and rather unthinking people. Let me give an instance of what I mean. As soon as the service at Mr. Gladstone's funeral was concluded, the Prince of Wales, instead of leaving the Abbey, walked gravely to where Mrs. Gladstone was seated, took her hand in his, stooped over it, and

kissed it. A very uncourtier-like Radical who saw the scene exclaimed, 'This atones for a good deal. I'll never say another word against him as long as I live.'

(2) It will be a splendid Monarchy. The King has a natural taste for pomp, and has cultivated it by contact with all that is most magnificent in the courtly life of Europe. He is equally removed from parsimony and from profuseness. He will pay royally for the due maintenance of his kingly estate, but he will insist on money's worth for money. And the Democracy will have the satisfaction of knowing that, if they are taxed to pay the Civil List, they daily and hourly see the fruits of their taxation in those spectacles and pageants which are the joy of the multitude.

(3) It will be an impartial Monarchy. Long as we have known King Edward, conspicuously as he has moved among us, intimately as he has entered into our domestic and social life, we none of us know his politics. At the time when George IV was straining the Constitution to bursting-point, the Whig toast used to be 'The King, and may he never forget those principles which placed his family on the Throne.' There is no need to formulate the desire that King Edward VII may be true to the principles of 1688. That may be taken for granted; and, when we come

to the further question as between political parties, I confidently anticipate a complete impartiality. It is natural that he should have a profound belief in the sagacity and public virtue of Lord Salisbury. The Duke of Devonshire and Lord Rosebery are his old and intimate friends. But he always carried his courtesy towards Mr. Gladstone to the point of deference, and he was repaid by Mr. Gladstone's unbounded respect and regard. This was specially noticeable during the Eastern Question of 1876–1879. The Court, influenced by Lord Beaconsfield, was vehemently pro-Turk. Some members of the Royal Family, notably the Duke of Albany and the Duchess of Teck, openly proclaimed their Turkish sympathies. But not a word or sign was ever suffered to betray the opinion of the Heir-Apparent, and through a period of unequalled tension he maintained relations of equal cordiality with the head of the Government and the leader of the Opposition.

(4) It will be an active Monarchy. Here I am not speaking of merely physical activity. We have become so much accustomed to the omnipresence of Royalty that we take it for granted. I was thinking of the official business of the State and the part which the King will take in it. Depend upon it he is no *Roi Fainéant*. He has brought to his new duties an excellent intelligence and all the fresh interest

which is evoked by a completely new pursuit. On the verge of sixty he finds himself for the first time in the centre of affairs, with an influential, if not absolute, voice in the matters of the highest concern. The fact that henceforward the Court, at least during the Parliamentary session, is to reside permanently in London will enormously strengthen the King's hold over public business. I have often heard Mr. Gladstone say that even Queen Victoria's hold, tenacious as it was, had been loosened by her absence from the capital. No system of letters, telegrams, and despatch-boxes, however elaborate and complete, could supply the place of personal intercourse between Sovereign and Minister as occasion day by day required it. Even Windsor was too far to allow of constant interviews, and the Crown, if it was to exercise its due influence in public affairs, must have its local habitation in London.

And now I have pursued the theme of Monarchy as far as prudence permits. I have done with the Rose, and I shall next turn my attention to that section of Society which, not being the Rose, lives near it.

XVI

THE COURT

A VENERABLE peeress (whom we will call Lady Kew) developed in old age an uncomfortable habit of thinking aloud. A lady who was her neighbour was paying her a friendly visit, and, by way of something to say, observed that she was going next week to the Drawing Room. Great was the visitor's gratification when Lady Kew murmured to the ambient air, 'I wonder why people in her position want to go to Court. Well, poor thing! I suppose she must have a new gown sometimes, and the Drawing Room is an excuse.' Lady Kew had 'flourished' (as Mangnall's 'Historical Questions' used to say) in the first half of the nineteenth century, and she cherished the social sentiments appropriate to that epoch. But my own traditions are derived from sources even more historic, and were communicated to me by a lady who was born in 1792. At the Drawing Room at which she was originally presented the company numbered forty people, all told; and those forty were without exception persons

of great name and position. It is instructive to compare this number with the strings of unknown names which of late years have filled the 'Times' on the morning after each Drawing Room and Levee. Down to the end of the reign of George III, Drawing Rooms were held every week during the season, which lasted from the beginning of November to the King's birthday on June 4. They were held in the evening, and were really the Queen's parties, at which both ladies and gentlemen attended. Levees were always held in the daytime, and attended by gentlemen only. But both at Drawing Rooms and at Levees there was much less formality than now prevails; and in a limited society where everyone was known to the King and Queen there were personal recognitions, friendly greetings, and even sometimes protracted conversations between the Royal circle and the ladies and gentlemen who came to pay their court. That excellent Radical Lord Kimberley is the representative of an intensely Tory and once Jacobite family. He can remember his great-grandfather, the first Lord Wodehouse, who lived to be ninety-three and died in 1834. This venerable patriot devoted his whole life and half his fortune to the task of beating 'Coke of Holkham,' who headed the Whig party in Norfolk. When at length he succeeded in his effort and ousted Mr. Coke from the representation of the county, King George III said to him at the

Levee, 'So you've beat 'em at last, Sir John'—and forthwith raised him to the peerage.

William, Duke of Gloucester, nephew of George III, and affectionately called 'Silly Billy,' greeted with enthusiasm a naval officer of great distinction who attended the Levee on his return from foreign service. 'We haven't seen you at Court for a long time.' 'Well, no, sir; since I was here last I have been nearly to the North Pole.' 'By G——, with your red face, you look more as if you had been to the South Pole.' But these courtly conversations were not always so harmoniously pitched. George III, George IV, and William IV alike knew how to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by the Levee or the Drawing Room to give public expression to their personal displeasures. Writing in 1835, Greville says: 'His Majesty's Ministers are intolerably disgusted at his behaviour to them, and his studied incivility to everybody connected with them. The other day the Speaker was treated by him with shocking rudeness at the Drawing Room. He not only took no notice of him, but studiously overlooked him while he was standing opposite, and called up Manners Sutton (the defeated candidate for the Speakership) to mark the difference by extreme graciousness to the latter.' Anecdotes of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely; but enough has been said to illustrate the

difference between the Court then and the Court now. Then it was a social gathering of great people well acquainted with each other, over which the Sovereign presided, and in which he could talk freely to all and sundry who came within the charmed circle of his presence. Now it is merely a formal parade by which the thronging multitudes of the aspiring unknown notify to the world that they belong to what they regard as Society. In old days the Court was frequented by Ministers and magnates—people of great office, great name, and great estate. Now is the heyday of Ponsonby de Tomkyns, of Slipslop and Twoshoes, of Tag, Rag, and Bobtail.[1]

This enormous change in the scope and character of what is implied by attendance at Court has been the product of various causes. Some of these causes were purely economic. The commercial prosperity of the country under the fiscal policy of Peel and Cobden and Gladstone brought a great increase of commercial peers and baronets—'Paladins of high finance,' as Lord Beaconsfield used grotesquely to call them—and they brought with them, at least into the outer circles of the Court, their cohorts of relations and connexions. Some of the causes were political. The Reform Act of 1832, by transferring political power from the aristocracy to the middle class, created a new type of

[1] This was written before the new Regulations were issued.

commercial politician, who often attained to high office and whose families took a permanent place among the governing classes of the country. Then, again, there was the disappearance of the last traces of the feudal idea, the increasing respect paid to wealth for wealth's sake, and the ever-extending triumphs of social pushfulness. But there was another cause for the enlargement of the courtly circle which was more directly personal than any of these. When Prince Albert married Queen Victoria and settled in England, he brought with him from Germany certain very definite and very exalted notions concerning the proper power of the Crown. He brought also a foreigner's complete aloofness from the traditions and views of his adopted country; and a faculty of observation all the keener because it was calm. This much we know from his published memoirs; and I have been told by those who were behind the scenes in those now distant days that one of the characteristics of English life which most profoundly impressed him was the greatness of the English nobility. Till the French Revolution shook the foundations of the social system on both sides of the Channel, the claims of rank and birth were admitted with a childlike cheerfulness. Lord Beaconsfield says somewhere that it was esteemed a great concession to public opinion, so late as the reign of George II, that Lord Ferrers should be executed

for murder. 'The King of a new dynasty, who wished to be popular with the people, insisted on it, and even then he was hanged with a silken cord.' Even a hundred years later, some of these feudal traditions still lingered. Great men raised and commanded regiments of horse, recruited from their own tenantry and yeomanry. Others kept hereditary packs of hounds, the meets of which had in some cases served as disguises for Jacobite gatherings. One noble Duke ate his dinner to the strains of his private band. Another, whenever he crossed his ancestral drawbridge, was saluted by a castle-guard which wore his livery and badge. And these pomposities were redeemed from absurdity by the fact that they represented not only historical tradition but present wealth beyond the dreams of Continental avarice. A thousand pounds a day was the income currently attributed to a great ground-landlord on whose estate a fashionable quarter of London had grown up. 'I have £30,000 a year in Bedfordshire and £30,000 a year in Cambridgeshire and £30,000 a year in Devonshire, and my London property is worth more than all these put together,' said another in like case. When 'princely Sussex,' as Thackeray called him, 'whose diminished income would only allow him to give tea-parties,' stood on a hill in Woburn Park and saw the great masses of wood-land and the great tracts of corn-land

disappearing into the distance like a hazy sea, he exclaimed in audible soliloquy, 'And a much better thing to be Duke of Bedford than to be Duke of Sussex;' and no one thought of gainsaying him.

The substantial greatness of the English aristocracy lay in the fact that, broadly speaking, the great families owned the soil both in town and in country, and by owning the soil controlled the votes. A popular franchise, of course, did not exist, and the only check on the omnipotence of aristocracy was to be found in the smaller freeholders, who from the days of Hampden to those of Wilkes had used their independence for the furtherance of liberty. But gradually these freeholders disappeared. Pecuniary pressure made them glad to part with their hereditary acres, and by degrees the greater aristocracy swallowed up their smaller neighbours and extended their properties from one end of the county to the other. In the small boroughs they were omnipotent. Such of the inhabitants as were legally electors were tenants at will, and the electoral power of the borough belonged to the noble patron as absolutely as the market-tolls or the advowson of the Parish-Church. Such potentates as the Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Darlington, and Lord Lonsdale had pocket-boroughs which ran into double figures, and almost every peer of any territorial importance was

able to exercise a paternal influence over some handful of free and independent electors who congregated at his park-gates and returned a Member to Parliament. Some peers, too indifferent about politics to concern themselves with electioneering, habitually sold their boroughs in the open market; while others, more public-spirited, marched their nominees to Westminster, with orders to vote unquestioningly for the Minister or the Opposition. Before the Reform Act of 1832, it was estimated that 84 patrons of boroughs directly nominated 137 Members of Parliament, and that 70 others, by virtue of possessions and influence in counties and large towns, returned 150 more. This was real power, of which gilt coaches and Blue Ribbons, outriders and 'running footmen,' were only the outward and visible emblems.

Now, this accumulation of territory, wealth, social influence, and political power in the hands of an independent and closely-related class struck Prince Albert as a portent full of possible danger. If the great nobility of England should ever become seriously disaffected towards the established order or the reigning House, the consequence might be disastrous. To bribe them and to coerce them were equally impossible. They were too rich to be bought and too strong to be snubbed. The only way of

counter-working their influence was to create a new element in social and political life. This was done by the systematic encouragement and glorification of the great Middle Class. Commercial wealth had, ever since the days of Pitt, been a power in the State. Its possessors were now, as never before, honoured and decorated. The greatest noblemen were made aware (very much to their moral advantage) that the highest rank and the noblest names would not gain them admission to the inner circle of the Court unless backed by character and virtue. Painters, authors, actors, discoverers, men of science, social reformers, pioneers of education—'the chiefs of the professions, the patriarchs of letters, the primates of art'—even, in some favoured instances, chemists and solicitors and bank-managers, formed the phalanx from which, so to say, Prince Albert drew his personal bodyguard. Culture superseded blood, and South Kensington became the hub of the universe. In a word, the Prince admitted to the inner circle of courtly life and intimacy the chosen representatives of a great and active class which had never before been represented there. There was as yet no need to conciliate the Democracy, for it was not yet enfranchised. 'The Monarch and the Multitude' is a conjunction of later date. The Democracy as a recognized force in English

politics dates from 1867, and the Prince died in 1861. How he would have dealt with the new force if he had lived to see it must be matter of conjecture. It is a fact that he contrived to base the Throne on the devotion of the Middle Class, and thereby made it independent of a too-potent aristocracy.

XVII

THE PEERAGE

'I NEVER heard of a peer with an ancient lineage. The real old families of this country are to be found among the peasantry. The gentry, too, may lay some claim to old blood. I can point you out Saxon families in this county who can trace their pedigrees beyond the Conquest. I know of some Norman gentlemen whose fathers undoubtedly came over with the Conqueror. But a peer with an ancient lineage is to me quite a novelty. No, no; the thirty years of the Wars of the Roses freed us from those gentlemen. I take it that after the battle of Tewkesbury a Norman baron was almost as rare a being in England as a wolf is now. . . . When Henry VII called his first Parliament there were only twenty-nine temporal peers to be found, and even some of them took their seats illegally, for they had been attainted. Of those twenty-nine not five remain, and they—as the Howards, for instance—are not Norman nobility. We owe the English peerage to three sources—the spoliation of the Church,

the open and flagrant sale of honours by the elder Stuarts, and the borough-mongering of our own times. These are the three main sources of the existing peerage of England.'

Lord Beaconsfield, from whom this remarkable passage is quoted, had a favourite trick of uttering through the mouth of a leading character in one of his novels his own most audacious but most sincere beliefs. In this way he poured his exoteric scorn on our national theories of religion, politics, and social life. The advantages of the plan are obvious, for it saved him from inconvenient controversy with important personages whose most cherished prejudices he airily lampooned. The disguise of fiction protected him against the risks of outspokenness. He was, as everyone knows, a profound believer in the influence of heredity, and in his idler days he had spent a great deal of time in the study of pedigrees and genealogy. The upshot of his studies was that, though it suited his political purposes to flatter the so-called aristocracy (and even now and then to create a duke), he was most profoundly sceptical about the antiquity of the 'great families' from which, after he had conquered their prejudices, he derived so much of his support. 'I have always understood,' said Coningsby, 'that our peerage was the finest in Europe.' 'From themselves,' said Milbank, 'and the heralds they pay

to paint their carriages.' This is a characteristic touch; and in truth the only pedigree in which Lord Beaconsfield really believed was that of the House of Israel, and the only heraldic symbol which he honestly revered was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

With regard to the House of Lords his scepticism was, I believe, abundantly justified; and indeed it is shared by everyone whose researches have gone deeper than the pedigrees in Burke's Peerage or the 'Annals' of this or that titled family compiled by its domestic chaplain. The daughter of an English earl married in 1842 a member of the really illustrious House of Esterhazy; but her position in the society of Vienna was soon found to be intolerable, because the experts in genealogy discovered that her grandmother's father had been a banker, and that therefore the requisite Sixteen Quarterings were in her case incomplete. A Bishop's son, advertizing a commercial concern in which he is engaged, describes himself as the 'son of a well-known member of the House of Peers;' and, indeed, the description is technically correct. But in discussing the House of Lords as it now exists I shall dismiss from consideration the life-peerages, whether episcopal or judicial. No right can be more venerable than the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London to his writ of summons. No position can be more honourable than that of a great judge,

sitting in the House of Lords by virtue of personal merit. But, pursuing the subject of Aristocracy, I am concerned just now with our hereditary nobility, and with its claim to be considered historic. Aristocracy, according to Plato, is the Rule of the Best-born. If that definition be correct, how far can the House of Lords be reckoned an aristocratic institution? The 'Best-born,' I conceive, are those who can trace furthest back an ancestry filling great station and exercising great powers. In other words, antiquity is an essential element of Aristocracy, and in antiquity the English peerage is signally deficient. The House of Lords, excluding Bishops and Law Lords and including Lord Milner, consists at the present day of about 570 members. Of course only the merest handful can trace their pedigree for four hundred years. I quoted just now Lord Beaconsfield's assertion that when Henry VII summoned his first Parliament there were only twenty-nine peers to obey the call. Professor Freeman, a shade more generous, puts the number at thirty. By the end of Elizabeth's reign the peerage had grown to sixty. The Stuarts increased it to 168. The head of the peerage, the Duke of Norfolk, sits as Earl of Arundel by virtue of his ownership of Arundel Castle. This is a unique and mysterious tenure, of real though uncertain antiquity. But the Dukedom of Norfolk dates only from 1483. The Earldom of

Shrewsbury dates from 1442, the Viscountcy of Hereford from 1550, the Marquisate of Winchester from 1551. The most ancient peerages are the baronies by writ, and they (according to a modern doctrine of law which I will examine later on) are transmissible through endless successions of females, and therefore are obviously easier to keep alive. But even the oldest of these—De Ros, Le Despencer, and Hastings—date only from 1264.

On this slender substratum of passably old nobility the huge edifice of the modern House of Lords has been erected. The Reformation accounted for a considerable increase. The favourites of Henry VIII and their descendants grew rich on the lands which had belonged to the abolished monasteries. They sedulously blended their blood with that of the ancient aristocracy, and gradually made their way into the House of Lords. Thus, according to Mr. J. Horace Round, the Duke of Bedford descends from a fishmonger at Poole, and the Duke of Devonshire from the body-servant of Cardinal Wolsey. The levity of Charles II accounts for the dukedoms of Grafton, Richmond, and St. Albans, derived through Barbara Villiers, Louise Querouaille, and Nell Gwynn. The dukedom of Beaufort, also created by Charles II, represents a doubly bar-sinistered descent from John of Gaunt. The Duke of Buccleuch is descended in the male line from the ill-fated Mon-

mouth, and sits in the House of Lords by titles derived from this pseudo-royal ancestor. Even so lately as 1831 the Earldom of Munster was created for a son of William IV and Mrs. Jordan. The Revolution of 1688 brought its own element into the House of Lords, and descendants of William III's Dutch valets are now numbered among the dukes and earls of England. But the Great Leveller (if that ominous title may for a moment be wrested from its rightful possessor) was William Pitt. He applied himself deliberately and of set purpose to the task of swamping the older aristocracy, and he resolved to make the House of Lords representative of wealth rather than birth. In the first five years of his Administration he made fifty peers. In two years he made thirty-five more. When he took in hand to carry the Act of Union, he bought supporters for it with peerages which brought his total to 141. He ennobled landowners, bankers, merchants, nabobs, and contractors. He broke the invidious bar of racial prejudice by conferring a peerage on a Jew. The example which he set has been followed, with increasing freedom, by all succeeding Prime Ministers, and the House of Lords has been swamped with men who have spent their money on contested elections or have made large contributions to the electioneering funds of their party; with manufacturers and brewers; with chemists, doctors, and men of letters; with judges,

generals, and admirals to the number of at least 100; with chiefs of the Civil Service (Mr. Gladstone's special favourites); with politicians who, having failed in office, must be decently shelved; with great loanmongers who have financed wars, and with a multifarious throng who may indeed be possessed of every virtue, but who could not by the wildest flight of fancy be connected with Plato's idea of aristocracy. Lord Salisbury conferred a peerage on a political supporter who was said by his detractors to have begun life as a 'bus-conductor, and by his friends to have been largely interested in a carrier's business. But he was understood to have paid £10,000 to the party chest, and his money was as good as another's.

If the House of Lords is, on the face of its acknowledged dates, modern and unhistoric, the case is even worse when we look below the surface. Many of the choicest fictions connected with the peerage have been dispelled by recent research. Mr. Round has proved that the Feildings, in spite of Gibbon, are no more related to the Hapsburgs than to the Pharaohs. The etymologists tell us that a Howard is a hog-ward, or pig-keeper, and that the ancestor of the Duke of Norfolk was something like Gurth the Swineherd in 'Ivanhoe.' Many of the names which sound most sweetly in peerage-loving ears are fraudulently borne, having been assumed in consequence of marriage with

the daughters of older families, or merely because they were more euphonious than the lawful patronymic. A distich fondly cherished in the family to which it pertains affirms that

> Before the Norman into England came,
> Bentley was my seat and Tollemache was my name.

But, as it happens, Lord Tollemache's name is really Halliday. The Smithsons assumed the name, when they acquired the estates, of the historic Percys. As with the Duke of Northumberland, so with Lord Anglesey, Lord Gainsborough, Lord Manvers, and fifty more. They all bear surnames which are not their own; and Paget is properly Bayly, and Noel is Edwards, and Pierrepont is Medows, and Carington is Smith, and De Moleyns is Mullins. There is, in truth, no end to the absurdities, the mystifications, and the unrealities on which the British peerage has built up its claim to be considered an aristocracy. But by far the most remarkable part of all this solemn hocus-pocus is the doctrine (to which I adverted above) that a writ of summons permanently 'ennobled the blood' of the baron who received it, and made his barony, failing males, transmissible through females to the end of time. The practical working of this doctrine must be unfolded in another chapter.

XVIII

BARONIES BY WRIT

I HAVE pointed out that our oldest baronies only date from the thirteenth century, and that even this degree of antiquity is due to the fact that they are transmissible through females. That they are so transmissible is due to a curious evolution of constitutional law, and illustrates afresh Freeman's favourite contention that none of our political institutions were ever enacted. They grew to be what they are by haphazard and without design. Even the recognition of the hereditary principle seems to have been in its beginnings purely accidental. In the dawn of Parliamentary history the King summoned to his Council (besides elected representatives of the Commonalty, with whom we are not now concerned) the magnates of the land—the barons and the bishops and the greater abbots. So far the hereditary principle was not recognized as such. The bishops and the abbots could have no heirs in the common sense of the term, but their official successors were in turn the great men of the land, possessing the

same wealth, station, and influence; and, when one Bishop of London or Abbot of St. Albans died, it was natural to summon his successor to take the vacant place in Parliament. Exactly the same process seems to have occurred with reference to the barons. 'When a baron was summoned to one Parliament there was at least a presumption in favour of summoning him to another; there was even a kind of presumption in favour of summoning his son after him.' The essence of a barony was the tenure of land, and where a baron's son or nephew held the same lands as the deceased father or uncle it was natural to summon him in respect of his tenure; and what at first was mere presumption became custom, and custom soon developed into right. The descendants of a man who had once received a writ of summons to Parliament claimed the right to receive a similar writ, and the right was conceded and acted on. The lords themselves laid down that no other deed or document or ceremony was necessary to create a peer. The King's writ 'ennobled the blood' and bestowed a hereditary seat in Parliament —a doctrine, says Freeman, which nobody would have discovered in the language of the writ itself. This, so far as it can be traced, is the highly casual origin of our hereditary peerage.

The principle was fully established during the course of the fourteenth century, and in that century

it underwent a very important modification. New ranks of peerage, such as Dukedoms, Marquisates, and Viscountcies, were created. These were conferred by letters-patent, and the patents generally continued the peerage to all male descendants. Patents limited to the life of the recipient were sometimes, but seldom, granted; and by the middle of the fifteenth century, at latest, the peerage had become a hereditary body. The method of creating by letters-patent was extended to the older dignities of Earl and Baron; and though the writ of summons was still required (as it is at the present day) before the peer created by patent could take his seat, it was only the holders of the most ancient baronies who sat in Parliament in virtue of the writ of summons alone. So by degrees it came to be recognized that a barony, once created by writ of summons, was a hereditary dignity, but it still was regarded as being connected with land. And so before long the rights of heirs female as well as male began to be admitted. When a baron died without male issue and left his lands to his daughter or sister, the son of that daughter or sister would, when his turn came, claim the barony which his grandfather or uncle had enjoyed. This claim conceded, the question arose whether the new baron should be numbered as next in order to his predecessor in title, or whether the intervening heir female should be reckoned as having

inherited the barony together with the estate. When it was decided that she should be so reckoned, although of course disqualified by her sex from receiving the writ of summons, it was only a proper recognition of her right to style her Baroness and count her in the line of barons. Thus the baroness in her own right became a recognized figure in the English peerage, signing, like a peer, by her title without a Christian name, and transmitting her honours to her descendants, male or female, in endless descent. The working of the principle may be sufficiently illustrated by the case of the present Lord De Clifford. He is the twenty-second bearer of a barony created by writ of summons in 1299. It was originally conferred on the Cliffords who became Earls of Cumberland, and when that earldom came to an end for lack of male heirs the barony passed to the heir female; and the same process was repeated in the eighteenth century, and again in the nineteenth. Thus the same barony of De Clifford, created by that original writ of summons, has belonged in turn to five different families—the Cliffords, Tuftons, Cokes, Southwells, and Russells; and supposing that the present Lord De Clifford, who is a minor, has a daughter only, the barony will pass into the family into which the young lady marries. This instance illustrates what I said at the beginning about the artificial antiquity of our oldest baronies. A title

limited to heirs male will naturally die out long before a title transmissible to 'heirs general' (which term includes females), even though the two were created on the same day.

But though blood played the most important part in the transmission of a barony by writ, it was still closely associated with the ownership of land. We saw before that where a man owned the same land as his father he was summoned to Parliament as his father was before him, and that where, failing male issue, the land passed to a daughter or sister, the claim to the barony passed with the land. But where, on the failure of the male issue, the land was divided between several daughters or sisters, the claim to the barony was divided between them and their issue, or in technical parlance, fell into abeyance. Supposing there were two co-heiresses and the issue of one of them failed, the abeyance automatically terminated itself in favour of the survivor; but where both sisters founded families the abeyance must go on till terminated in favour of one or other of the descendants, by an act of Royal prerogative. The method by which these abeyances were terminated was generally an appeal in the first instance to the House of Lords, which examined the claim and reported on it to the King. And among the points taken into account was the possession of the land in respect of which the original baron was

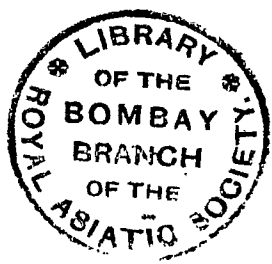
summoned. He or she who, inheriting some of that baron's blood, also inherited his land, was commonly allowed to be the rightful heir. Sometimes the House of Lords seems to have admitted the claimant without further formalities. Sometimes the House reported to the Crown. Sometimes the Crown acted on the Lords' recommendation; sometimes it did not. Sometimes the Crown restored the old barony; sometimes it created a fresh one as a sort of compensation. Sometimes it acted on the territorial claim, and sometimes it restored the peerage to a claimant who had lost the land. In short, the whole doctrine of the transmission of baronies by writ was enveloped in uncertainty and contradiction; and early in the nineteenth century the House of Lords deemed it expedient to investigate and methodize the system. To this end the House appointed a 'Committee to enquire into the Dignity of a Peer,' and directed this Committee to search all the proceedings which had ever taken place in the matter of disputed successions, to tabulate the evidence, and report the results. The Committee collected an enormous amount of evidence, chiefly in black-letter, and embodied it in six volumes, which formed the appendix to a highly-important report, drawn up by the first Lord Redesdale, ex-Chancellor of Ireland.

The gist of this report was that when once a man

had been created a baron by writ of summons a 'personal dignity' had been created, which survived in spite of the alienation of lands; and that any man or woman who could show that he or she had a drop of that original baron's blood in his or her veins, even though deduced through generations of great grandmothers, had a claim to the barony. As between co-heirs with equally valid claims, it was for the Crown to decide; but where it could be proved that all co-heirs had disappeared the surviving heir had an absolute claim. This, divested of legal jargon, was the doctrine adopted by the House of Lords, on the report of Lord Redesdale's Committee in 1821. It produced an immediate and far-reaching effect. Everyone who knew, or thought he knew, anything about his ancestors three hundred years before, began to enquire whether they were not descended from men who had sat in Parliament as barons by writ. In cases where the abeyances had been short and recent there was no great trouble in proving the claim. But investigation showed that there were plenty of instances where, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the male issue had failed, the lands had been divided among heirs female, and the claim had become so infinitely subdivided among the descendants of the original co-heiresses that no one had ever dreamed of trying to enforce it. Was it possible to reunite these

broken links and prove one's direct descent, through ancestresses, from an Edwardian baron? That difficulty overcome, was it possible to prove that no one else had a superior claim by descent from an older daughter or sister than the one from whom the claimant derived? Was it possible to induce the Crown to resuscitate a title when it had been for centuries divorced from the land which originally gave it its meaning?

These were anxious questions not to be decided without an enormous expenditure of energy, labour, and money. One of the first persons who seriously raised them and carried them through to a triumphant conclusion was a lady, and her spirited conduct had such important results that it deserves separate narration.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XIX

A CRUCIAL INSTANCE

So far as the historic basis of the present peerage is concerned, I have taken counsel with Lord Beaconsfield and Professor Freeman, and have adopted the opinion that after the battle of Tewkesbury 'a Norman baron was as rare a being as a wolf.' I have pointed out that, excepting a mere handful of titles such as Derby, Shrewsbury, and Abergavenny, our peerage is of modern growth, and that even the titles which seem most venerable are the highly artificial products of a recent doctrine of law. Having generalized upon this theme, I now propose, as the Scotch say, to 'condescend upon particulars,' and to illustrate my contention by the vicissitudes of a particular title.

Sir Edmund Braye, knight, of Eaton Braye, in the county of Bedford, was summoned to Parliament as a baron by writ dated November 3, 1529. He died in 1539, leaving one son and six daughters. The son, John Braye, was also summoned to Parliament as

Baron Braye from 1545 to 1555. He died without issue in 1557, when his estates were divided among his sisters, and (according to the doctrine adopted by the House of Lords in 1821) his peerage fell into abeyance between those ladies and their descendants. The eldest, Anne Braye, married Lord Cobham, but her grandsons were attainted for high treason, and, the attainder never having been reversed, their honours were forfeited to the Crown. The second, Elizabeth Braye, married Sir Ralph Verney. She was the great-great-great-great-grandmother of Margaret Verney, who married Sir Thomas Cave, and was in turn the great-grandmother of Sarah Cave. The third, Frideswide Braye, married Sir Percivall Hart, and was the ancestress of the present Sir William Hart-Dyke. The fourth married Sir Robert Peckham, and her descendants, not being traceable, are presumed to be extinct. The fifth married Lord Chandos, and is represented by the Duke of Bedford. The sixth married Thomas Lifield, and is represented by Mrs. Trevilian. The estate of Eaton Braye, in respect of which Edmund and John Braye had been summoned to Parliament, having been divided, on the second Lord Braye's death, among these six ladies, soon became infinitely subdivided, and the various portions of it passed by sale to various possessors, quite irrespective of blood. There was no longer anyone who could even colourably profess to

occupy the position of the Lords Braye, and it never occurred to any of their sisters or nephews or great-nephews or great-nieces to claim the barony. And so things went on for nearly three centuries, when Lord Redesdale's report on 'the Dignity of a Peer' being adopted by the House of Lords set everyone rummaging among his muniments, as I described in my last chapter. Among the people who rummaged most diligently, and by rummaging overcame the greatest difficulties, was the lady whom I named above as Sarah Cave. This lady was the only sister of Sir Thomas Cave, seventh baronet, of Stanford Hall, near Rugby—a place of extraordinary interest to architects and archæologists. She was born in 1768, married in 1790 to Henry Otway (who died in 1815), and in 1792 succeeded, on the death of her brother, Sir Thomas Cave, to the estate of Stanford Hall, whereupon she resumed her maiden name and became Mrs. Otway-Cave. She was a lady of great vigour, physical and mental, and lived till 1862, well within the recollection of the present writer. But the great achievement of her life belonged to an earlier date. When in 1821 the House of Lords decided that where once a man had sat in Parliament as a baron by writ of summons his blood was ennobled and his dignity existed to all time in his descendants, however remote, Mrs. Otway-Cave said to herself: 'Lo! I am eighth in direct descent from

the first Lord Braye. His male issue failed in his only son. According to this new doctrine his peerage is in abeyance between the issue of his daughters. Of that issue I am one. Can I prove to the satisfaction of the House of Lords that my claim to the peerage is better than that of the rest?'

The lands of Eaton Braye having long passed out of the possession of Lord Braye's descendants, Mrs. Otway-Cave had no territorial claim. She was forced to rely on seniority. Seniority can only be established by proving the extinction of older lines; and that, in a pedigree so widely ramified and descending through three centuries, was no easy matter. However, she went to work with a will, and incurred a prodigious expenditure of time, labour, and money in establishing the chain of descent which I set forth above. The kind of process by which results of this sort are secured was cleverly sketched in 'Little Dorrit,' where Pancks, pursuing the pedigree of the Dorrits of Dorsetshire, runs through his links of proof—a churchyard in Bedfordshire, an enquiry in York, a church in London, a family Bible, a clerk at Durham, an old seafaring gentleman at Dunstable, a gravestone, and a stillborn baby; and the result was not seldom like that in 'Felix Holt,' where the ancient line of the Transomes is found to end ignominiously in old Tommy Trounsem, the drunken bill-sticker. The principal agent on whom

the peerage-seeking aspirants relied in their search after their lost baronies was a mysterious person, half lawyer, half antiquary, whose real name, I believe, was Fleming, but who was drawn by Lord Beaconsfield in 'Sybil' as Baptist Hatton. Describing this personage as he was in 1842, the great novelist, who never invented but always observed, said: 'He has made more peers of the realm than our gracious Sovereign, and since the Reform of Parliament the only chance of a Tory becoming a peer is the favour of Baptist Hatton; though who he is no one knows, and what he is no one can describe. . . . If you must have a definition, Hatton may rank under the genus "antiquary," though his species is more difficult to describe. He is a heraldic antiquary; a discoverer, inventor, framer, arranger of pedigrees; profound in the mysteries of genealogies; an authority, I believe, unrivalled in everything that concerns the constitution and elements of the House of Lords; consulted by lawyers though not professing the law, and startling and alarming the noblest families in the country by claiming the ancient baronies which they have often assumed without authority for obscure pretenders, many of whom he has succeeded in seating in the Parliament of his country. All the business of the country connected with descent flows into his chambers. Not a pedigree in dispute, not a peerage in abeyance

which is not submitted to his consideration; and if you want to claim a peerage, he is your man.' By such assistance as that of the mythical Baptist Hatton Mrs. Otway-Cave succeeded in carrying her point. She proved, very much to her own satisfaction, and—what was more important—to the satisfaction of the Committee of Privileges in the House of Lords, that the rights of Anne Braye were forfeited by an unrepealed attainder; that she herself was the senior representative of Elizabeth Braye, and, as such, had a prior claim to that of the descendants of Frideswide and Mary and Dorothy and Frances Braye. On this showing, although she did not possess an acre of the lands of Eaton Braye, in respect of which her ancestor had originally been summoned to Parliament, and though the title had never been heard of since 1557, Mrs. Otway-Cave claimed the Barony of Braye. The Committee of Privileges reported favourably on her claim, and on October 3, 1839, letters-patent were issued terminating the abeyance in her favour and conferring on her the title of Baroness Braye, 'to hold the said dignity to her and the heirs of her body, she being one of the co-heirs of John, Lord Braye, who was the only son of Sir Edmund Braye, summoned to Parliament by writ 21st Henry VIII.'

This triumphant result stimulated other aspirants to redouble their efforts; and the termination of the

abeyance of the Barony of Braye was followed, in rapid succession, by that of the Barony of Hastings, created in 1264; the Barony of Beaumont, created in 1309; and the Barony of Camoys, created in 1264. With regard to the Barony of Hastings men tell a pathetic tale of the vanity of human wishes. This title had been in abeyance since 1290. To prove a descent through the maze of six centuries was a task which surpassed in difficulty even that accomplished by Mrs. Otway-Cave. But Mr. Henry L'Estrange Styleman Le Strange, of Hunstanton, was equal to the occasion, and after infinite toil and expenditure succeeded in proving that he and Sir Jacob Astley were co-heirs to the peerage. Whereupon the Crown terminated the abeyance in favour of Sir Jacob, and Mr. Le Strange remained what he was, *minus* half his fortune, expended on seating his co-heir. Time would fail me to tell of similar chances and mischances which befell the titles of De Ros, De Clifford, Audley, Mowbray, Le Despencer, Willoughby de Eresby, Vaux of Harrowden, Zouche of Haryngworth, and a dozen more. Enough has perhaps been said to show the very sandy foundation on which even the oldest-sounding portion of our peerage reposes. A characteristic touch of social absurdity may not unfitly close the narration. The present Lord Braye (grandson of the undaunted Mrs. Otway-Cave) was introduced to a lady who never lost an opportunity

of saying a civil thing, and on hearing his name she said with a winning smile, 'I am so glad to make your acquaintance, Lord Braye. I have always thought yours such a *beautiful* title.' Perhaps the epithet was scarcely well chosen, but the force of civility could no further go.

XX

THE HEREDITARY PRINCIPLE

MORE years ago than it is pleasant to remember the present writer made his maiden speech in his School Debating Society. He moved that 'in the opinion of this House a hereditary legislative body is a mistake,' and, in spite of an impressive display of first principles and historical lore, he was beaten by 21 to 12. A great many things have happened since that debate, but the mover of the resolution has seen no reason to alter his opinion. He holds it, indeed, more tenaciously than ever, but he has learned from Professor Freeman what then he did not know—that the English House of Lords is hereditary only by an accident.

It would appear that in the earliest dawn of our national history every freeman had a right to appear in person and say 'Yea' or 'Nay' in the Assembly of the nation. But this was a right which, from its very nature, could only be exercised by men living near the place of assembly or else sufficiently well off to travel about the country without difficulty. From the

Norman Conquest onward the King took to summoning particular men to the Assembly, and 'it is a universal law that when a practice of summons comes in it gradually comes to act as the shutting out of those who are not summoned.' From the time of the Great Charter onwards we can trace two ways of summoning and two classes of the summoned. There is the class of those who are summoned each by himself, and there is the class of those who are summoned in a body. 'Here is the first rude distinction of Lords and Commons.' The ancient Assembly of summoned individuals developed into the House of Lords, and there grew up by its side a new Assembly which developed into the House of Commons. The class which was summoned in a body took to sending representatives first of the shires and then of the boroughs, and these representatives formed the House of Commons. The King's summons was the creative force alike for the House of Lords and the House of Commons. 'While the freemen in general were summoned to appear by representatives, the great men of the land were still summoned to appear in their own persons.'

We have already seen that the Barons who were landowners were generally summoned. Above them were the Earls, who were local officers and were always summoned. The Bishops and the greater Abbots were local magnates who were always sum-

moned, and the smaller Abbots were sometimes summoned. When the House of Lords began to take its present shape the earldoms had already become hereditary. They were local offices, and when one of these offices became vacant by death there was a tendency to fill it by appointing the son of the late officer, just as there was a tendency when the King died to elect his son to fill his place. 'As the earldom sank gradually from an office into a mere rank and possession, it naturally became more strictly hereditary.' We have seen how the same principle applied to baronies, and how when one baron died there grew up a custom of summoning the son who inherited his lands to fill his place. The custom grew, as customs will, into a right. 'It came to be held that a Writ of Summons, once received and acted on, gave both to the man to whom it was sent and to his heirs after him a right to a summons to all future Parliaments.' This doctrine seems to have been fully established in the course of the fourteenth century. In that century, too, the King took to creating new ranks of peerage, as Duke, Marquis, and afterwards Viscount. These were created by patent; and the King also began to create Earls and Barons by patent, instead of, as formerly, by writ of summons only. These creations by patent were either hereditary or for life; but the hereditary doctrine grew and grew, and patents for life

became the exception. By the middle of the fifteenth century, at the latest, the temporal peerage had become a hereditary body. But the Spiritual peers, who were of necessity life-peers, were a majority of the whole body. There never was a moment when the English people, or any English King or law-giver, decreed that the House of summoned individuals should be a hereditary body. The whole present position of the Lords —their rights, powers, privileges, and, above all, their hereditary character—came about by accident and growth. The Peers themselves, and themselves alone, declared the hereditary character of the House of Lords; and, though no Act of Parliament ever enacted it, several have since assumed it, and it has come to be regarded as an essential part of our constitutional system.

It must, however, be borne in mind that, as in the beginning, the creative force of each House was the King's writ of summons. So that writ is still necessary before a peer can sit and vote in the House of Lords. A man may be created a peer by patent or he may inherit a peerage by descent, but he can no more take his seat in the House of Lords till he has received his writ of summons than Mr. Balfour can take his seat in the House of Commons till he is sent there by the electors of East Manchester in obedience to the King's writ of election. When the Crown dissolves Parliament it

dissolves not only the House of Commons but also the House of Lords. Individual peers remain, but there is no House of Peers till the Crown again calls the individuals together. The point has something more than an antiquarian interest, for, when in 1884 the conflict between the House of Lords and the House of Commons became acute, some excellent authorities on the Constitution held that there were three ways out of the difficulty: (1, which unhappily was adopted) to submit to the Lords; (2) to create such a number of peers as should swamp the Opposition (clearly undesirable); and (3) to withhold the Writ of Summons from such peers as were obviously unfit to be the arbiters in an all-important issue. Of course this would have been, like the Royal Warrant for the abolition of purchase in the Army, a high-handed act of Royal prerogative; but, in spite of Lord Redesdale's doctrine of 'the Dignity of a Peer,' it would not have been illegal, and according to some excellent judges it would not have been unconstitutional.

I said just now that what the House of Lords now is the Lords themselves have made it. Let us pursue this statement a little more in detail. We have seen that the Lords and the Lords only, laid down the rule founded on Lord Redesdale's report that the King's writ 'ennobled the blood' and bestowed a hereditary seat in Parliament:

so that, when once a man had been summoned to Parliament as a baron by writ, his heirs to all time were entitled to be similarly summoned. They laid down in the seventeenth century that a peerage cannot under any circumstances be alienated or surrendered to the Crown, though in older times peerages had often been so surrendered, and though it is plainly expedient that such surrenders should at any rate be possible. But it was in the reign of Queen Victoria that the House of Lords crowned its insolence by refusing to admit within its doors a peer created for life only. It is of course true that more recently the Judicature Act has enabled the Crown to create a limited number of Lords of Appeal for life; but this is a special and exceptional arrangement, and does not invalidate the general principle established by the Lords in 1856. The notion of life-peerages had long been favourably entertained by a certain school of reformers, who while wishing to maintain a Second Chamber, wished also to give it a more popular and more representative character by adding to it eminent men whose means, though sufficient for their lives, would not suffice to endow hereditary peerages. The result of this device, if freely carried into effect, would have been to change the House of Lords into an Assembly of Notables in some ways resembling the French Senate under the Second Empire. The notion was very distasteful to the

constitutional pedants and dryasdusts, who threatened strenuous opposition. Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister, and he was not averse from trying a plan which might please his more advanced supporters, and which, as it was almost certain to be defeated, could at any rate do no harm. The Whig Cabinet, in which Lord Cranworth was Chancellor, chose as the subject of their experiment Sir James Parke, a Baron of the Exchequer and one of the most eminent lawyers of his time. Baron Parke was born in 1782, was married in 1817, and had no son, but three daughters. His was therefore a case in which it would make no practical difference whether his peerage were hereditary or for life, while his professional eminence would have made him a valuable addition to the House of Lords. Accordingly, on January 15, 1856, letters-patent were issued creating Sir James Parke a baron of the United Kingdom for the term of his natural life by the title of Lord Wensleydale, and he was duly summoned by writ to the opening of Parliament on January 31. Opposition immediately arose. On February 1, an ex-Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst, moved that a copy of the letters-patent purporting to create Sir James Parke a baron of the United Kingdom for life be referred to the Committee of Privileges, with directions to examine and consider and report to the House. The subject, he said, was one of no ordinary interest, for it involved

the question whether the ancient and hereditary character of the House of Lords should continue, or whether it should be broken down and remodelled according to the discretion and interest of the Prime Minister of the day. The Committee of Privileges began its sitting on February 12, and examined a host of witnesses—chiefly heralds, lawyers, and authorities on the practice of the House. On the 22nd Lord Lyndhurst moved that the Committee, having examined the letters-patent, report it as their opinion that neither the said letters-patent nor the accompanying writ of summons could entitle the grantee to sit and vote in Parliament. He contended that there are certain limits to the power of the Crown in the creation of peers, and also that the House of Lords has a jurisdiction and a right to decide on the validity of the patents by which commoners are elevated to the peerage. Lord Grey moved as an amendment that the highest legal authorities having concurred in declaring the Crown to possess the power of creating peerages for life, and this power having been exercised in former times, the House would not be justified in assuming the illegality of Lord Wensleydale's patent and in refusing to allow him to take his seat. This amendment was beaten by 92 to 57, and Lord Lyndhurst's resolution was agreed to. It was thus virtually decided by the House of Lords that the Crown could

not create a peer for life, and Lord Palmerston declined to strike a blow for the imperilled prerogative. A fresh patent was issued creating Lord Wensleydale a peer in the ordinary course, with remainder to his heirs male (who did not exist). He duly took his seat, and there was an end of the controversy, which was thus summed up in later years by a publicist of high authority:

'The Lords, in defiance of law, in defiance of history, in defiance of the clear rights of the Crown and of the manifest expediency of the case, had the matchless impudence to refuse to Lord Wensleydale, a baron of the realm as lawfully created as any of them, his lawful seat in this House. . . . The body which thus disloyally, almost rebelliously, flouted the Crown, has no right to claim respect on any grounds of antiquity or traditional dignity when, in like spirit, they turn round and flout the people. They have, to be sure, their "noble blood"—strange effect of King Edward's writs of summons. Let us wait and see what their "noble blood" can do for them when they have turned every other power of the State against them.'

Well said, Professor Freeman, sound Liberal and great historian; but the mischief of it is that 'every other power of the State' seems remarkably well disposed towards the usurping Lords. Of course from time to time there have been acute controversies,

in which the House of Lords has been brought into conflict with the House of Commons, or even with the English people. But then the Lords saw that their safety lay in retreat, and retreated accordingly. Indignation died down. The Englishman's natural love of a lord reasserted itself, and, as long as their lordships were content with a moderate amount of petty mischief, all was calm. Then, emboldened by impunity in trifles, they would advance to 'more impious heights of daring' and perform some act of insolence which brought them once again into collision with the forces of freedom. Here let me revert to the Franchise Bill of 1884. The Lords declined to pass it until they had seen the Redistribution Bill which was to follow. It was a sharply-defined issue, and the Liberal party took up the challenge with delighted and determined zeal. It seemed that at last we were to have an opportunity of trying conclusions with the hereditary enemies of popular freedom. All through the summer and autumn of 1884 the preparations for the battle were ripening, and the Liberal party, confident of its cause and proud of its leader, was hungering for the fray. Then suddenly, under influences which may be guessed but cannot be known, Mr. Gladstone capitulated. He yielded exactly the point for which the Lords had been contending. The rejection of the Bill was indeed averted, but a graver mischief had been done. The

Lords had learned their own strength, and from that ignominious day to this they have enjoyed a new lease of power and popularity. The rejection of the Home Rule Bill, with every circumstance of contumely and without a single protest from the British people, marked the height of their triumph. It is true that Mr. Gladstone in his valedictory speech to the House of Commons bequeathed to the Liberal party the task of coercing the House of Lords. But he and his colleagues by the capitulation of 1884 had done more than any Tory Ministry could ever have effected to make the position of the Lords impregnable. To-day they are our masters, and the English nation seems to love their mastery. I have examined their claim to rule; I have enquired into the sources of their power, and have illustrated their use of it. But I am under no illusions in the matter, and I know that, in spite of all that has come and gone, the House of Lords is, next to the Crown, the most popular institution in the country. 'What shall posterity most wonder at—the audacity of the imposture or the blindness of the dupe ?. the immensity of the worship or the pettiness of the idol ? '

XXI

ARISTOCRACY

DID Lord Macaulay really say that we have the most popular aristocracy and the most aristocratic people in the world? I hope he did not, for it is exactly one of those antitheses which make nonsense wear the aspect of sense, and so impose on the unwary. But, anyhow, Mr. Matthew Arnold declared that he did, and made fun of the saying in that most delightful and least appreciated of books 'Friendship's Garland.' Mr. Arnold took his Prussian friend Arminius to Eton, and in the playing-fields ('which with you,' the Prussian said, 'are the school') they saw the son of the famous bottle-merchant at Reigate playing cricket with a son of a great family. 'It is only in England,' said Mr. Arnold to Arminius, 'that this beautiful, salutary intermixture of classes takes place. Look at the bottle-merchant's son and the Plantagenet being brought up side by side. None of your absurd separations and seventy-two quarterings here. Very likely young Bottles will end by being a lord himself.' Well, that

pleasing prophecy was uttered thirty years ago, and it has been fulfilled over and over again. Young Bottles, and young Barrels, and young Capel Court have long since taken their places among our hereditary legislators, and sit cheek by jowl with the Talbots and the Stanleys and all those 'tenth transmitters of a foolish face' whose genealogical claims to reverence I have lately examined.

'The most popular aristocracy in the world.' I take those words on Mr. Arnold's authority, and I apply them to the subject with which I have to deal. What is Aristocracy? If, as Aristotle taught, it is the Rule of the Best, we may safely affirm that it never existed in any place or at any time. The Best, in the sense of the most virtuous, are not often those who come to the top and dominate their fellow-men. On the contrary, they 'live hidden lives and rest in unvisited graves,' while the power of rule is exercised by self-centred and mundane natures, to whom the present and the tangible are all-in-all, and for whom the Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number means the predominance of No. 1. But if Aristotle idealized Aristocracy, Plato (for once) took a more material view, and defined it as the Rule of the Best Born—a very different rule, indeed, but one which has actually existed. I imagine that Aristocracy, in the sense of the Rule of the Best Born,

governed the greater part of Europe from the close of the Middle Age to the French Revolution, and this in spite of kings, who pressed upon it from above, and soldiers and ecclesiastics, who invaded it from below. But we have seen already that the exclusive power of Birth has long since disappeared from the polity of England; so we are reduced to a very modern and rather vulgar conception of Aristocracy, as implying wealth, titles, and social influence. And it is an aristocracy so constituted that Macaulay described as 'the most popular in the world.' I do not dispute the dictum. Indeed I believe it to be more conspicuously true to-day than when it was uttered. But what are the grounds of this popularity? What are the distinguishing graces and virtues of the modern aristocracy?

In old days people imagined that physical courage was a peculiar attribute of aristocracy. It was a curious superstition, for the close and continuous interbreeding of a few families, which was the very essence of an aristocratic caste, was abstractedly unlikely to produce physical virtues. The ever-increasing dilution of the English aristocracy with elements drawn from other strata has prevented, or at least arrested, decadence, and our so-called aristocrats of to-day are just as brave as their humbler countrymen. But they are no braver; and the battlefields of Africa could tell, if the testimony

were needed, that merely physical courage is a gift bestowed as richly on 'the Private of the Buffs' as on the supposed descendant of Crusaders. I remember a little boy belonging to a historic family who cried when he cut his finger—not because it hurt, but because he was poignantly disappointed to find that his blood was not blue, as he had always been taught, but red, like anyone else's. That boy is now a man, and he has probably realized long before this that whatever his blood contains of courage and manly virtue it owes to the fact that he is an Englishman, and not to the fact that he is an aristocrat.

Another quality, closely related to physical courage though not identical with it, has been held, even by people who professed to be great thinkers and certainly were great writers, to distinguish the aristocracy from their fellows. This is the uncomplaining endurance of pain or annoyance—the 'cheery stoicism' which Carlyle extolled—the readiness to bear fatigue and bad weather in pursuing field sports or athletics, over which Kingsley used to wax dithyrambic. A single visit to the Accident Ward of a great hospital would suffice to dispel that fantastic delusion. There you see men whose whole life since early boyhood has been spent in the most exhausting and the most perilous employment, in labour infinitely harder than that of the football field, in conditions of heat or cold compared with which fielding in a

hot sun or shooting wild-duck on the ice are elegant and comfortable recreations. That these men do not complain of their lot is a matter of course. We expect it of them just because they are men, and no one gushes over their 'cheery stoicism.' But then comes the more searching trial, far harder to endure than pain or toil or privation. Some sudden stroke of unlooked-for fate—a slip, an explosion, a falling weight, an unsuspected strain—and the bread-winner is struck down, and the home is broken up, and the children are hungry, and the wife is sick, and there is no remedy and no recovery, and no hope and no prospect except the workhouse infirmary and the pauper's grave. And all this is borne without a murmur, without a reproach, with no sign of emotion more demonstrative than a choked voice and a tear hastily brushed away. Are these men aristocrats? I trow not. But where is the aristocracy which could teach them endurance?

Another characteristic which, time out of mind, was held to distinguish aristocracy, is courtesy. But a student of society who should search for that commodity in the aristocracy of to-day would resemble a naturalist looking for an auk's egg in a schoolboy's collection. He might, indeed, by great luck find it; just as in his social quest he might encounter Lord Spencer or Lord Pembroke, or another of that tiny group who maintain the 'grand manner' of the past.

But the breed is practically extinct, and the relics of it are as rare as they are attractive. In recent Parliaments it has been matter of common remark that young M.P.s of great families were distinguished from all sections of their fellow-members by their boyish and even loutish rudeness, whereas the 'Labour Members' invariably set the example of courteous, orderly, and dignified behaviour. But young fellows excited with politics and champagne will be noisy, even though their blood be technically blue; and here again, as about courage, I do not insinuate that the manners of the aristocracy as a body are worse than those of their countrymen. I only insist that they are no better; and I confess that, in my humble judgment, the most offensive manner in the world is that which commonly marks the second generation of the newly-ennobled. It combines the roughness of the artizan with the purse-proud inflation of the moneyed man, and it superadds the self-complacency of the brand-new coronet. Sweet children of the new nobility, we know you well: and so, four centuries ago, did stout Hugh Latimer—'The Commonalty murmured, and said, "There never were so many gentlemen and so little gentleness."'

Chivalry we have already discussed; but it is impossible to avoid the subject when one is considering the characteristic virtues of Aristocracy. According to all old standards, the aristocrat was held to be neces-

sarily and essentially chivalrous. Chivalry was, and is, the enthusiasm of the strong for the rights of the weak; and it was characteristic of the noble, the *preux chevalier*, the fine gentleman, that he possessed this enthusiasm in the highest degree and was ready to sacrifice himself and his all for its cause. He looked with fine scorn on the sordid theories of 'sophisters, calculators, and economists.' To them and to their kind he left all thoughts of profit and advancement and success. He 'forbore his own advantage' and, like the knights-errant from whom he descended, he

rode abroad redressing human wrongs.

This is no mere dream of a golden age which never existed, no mere figment of a poet's fancy. I have known men to whom *Noblesse oblige* meant everything, men who instinctively ranged themselves on the weaker side; men who, just because they had great station and great name, felt themselves constrained to place all that they had at the service of unpopular causes and to champion the feeble against the mighty. To-day chivalry seems to me extinct. The one idea is to shout with the largest crowd, to back the winner, to side with the majority. America was strong and Spain was weak, so we backed America for all we were worth. We believed that France was weak, and we tried to pick a quarrel with her over Fashoda. The Armenians were a feeble folk, and we would not move

a finger to save them from massacre. Greece is a little country, and we had nothing but clumsy ridicule for her struggle against the Turkish tyranny. We were told that the South African Republics had lost the power of fighting—and we are learning our lesson. Now, in all these controversies Aristocracy, if it had been really what its eulogists believed it, ought to have shown England the more excellent way. But Aristocracy has proved itself to be no more chivalrous than the Middle Class and (as we must admit who remember the popular sympathy with the Bulgarians in 1876 and the Armenians in 1896) infinitely less so than the Working Class. And, as in great issues of public policy so in private questions of personal dealing. I recollect in 1884 a horrid case of cannibalism, where two shipwrecked sailors killed and ate a lad who was the third of the company. I vividly remember that a lady of the highest rank protested that they were quite right. Of course they were. Someone had got to be killed, and the boy, as the weakest, was the natural victim. 'Which things are an allegory.'

Another quality which was formerly supposed to mark the Aristocracy was its contempt for filthy lucre. For my own part, I confess to some scepticism about this aristocratic trait. Some of the most penurious people I have ever known have had the longest pedigrees, and their contempt for lucre was only a contempt

for the habit of acquiring it by trade. Money wrung from highly-rented land, or from the overcrowded tenements of great cities, has never stunk in the nostrils of 'our old nobility.' They drew the line at commerce, but that line has long since been obliterated. Dukes' sons rollick on the Stock Exchange and drudge at office-desks. Sprigs of aristocracy tout for wine-merchants and tobacconists. I have known one of the class who partly subsisted by recommending a bootmaker in the Burlington Arcade. Another was dressed for nothing by a tailor who said that there was no advertisement equal to this youth's figure. Others, longer-headed, pillage their friends at Bridge and Poker; and the more highly-educated detachment subsist by writing social paragraphs for 'Classy Cuttings.' Now to my mind all this is perfectly natural. There is no reason in the nature of things why members of an aristocracy, or pseudo-aristocracy, should not gamble in stocks and shares or deal in clay pipes and dolls' eyes. But I submit that the aristocratic broker or tradesman displays no more contempt for lucre, no more scruples about the way of acquiring it, no more dread of sharp practice or dishonourable dealing, than his untitled colleague. Some of the most notorious swindles of our time have been connected with some of the noblest names; and in commerce, as in other

departments of life, Aristocracy seems to be pretty much on a level with the rest of the nation.

Yet once more. Leadership used to be reckoned pre-eminently an attribute of Aristocracy; but where are the aristocratic leaders to-day? By leadership I mean the power to mark out a line of one's own, to follow it through evil report and good report, and to compel or induce others to follow it. Whom does Lord Salisbury lead? Whom the Duke of Devonshire? Has Lord George Hamilton any followers? Is there a Lansdownian party? Lord Beaconsfield once said that the most undignified spectacle in the world was a patrician in a panic. I think I know one which runs it close, and that is a body of men, highly placed and independent of popular favour, yet anxiously bent on the study of the Jumping Cat, and guiding their policy by what they believe to be the momentary sentiment of the Man in the Street. Probably in like cases we should most of us do the same. But that is beside the mark. I have been enquiring, not into our national characteristics, but into the special virtues of the English aristocracy; and my firm conviction is that the less said about them the better. 'Where is boasting? 'It is excluded.'

XXII

SUPERSTITION

A LADY who was born in 1801 returned in the eighties to London after a long retirement in the country. I asked what was the change in Society which struck her most forcibly. She instantly replied: 'The growth of superstition. I hear men and women, apparently sane, gravely discussing such things as second sight, apparitions, and divination. In my youth people who talked such stuff would have been put in Bedlam. Their friends would have wanted no further proof that they were mad.'

If this judgment on fashionable superstitiousness was true when it was uttered, it is more conspicuously true to-day. Superstitions, great and small, innocent and injurious, solemn and silly, flourish rankly in the soil of an idle and luxurious society. Some of them are made tolerable, even interesting, by their antiquity. Salutations to the new moon, homage to magpies, unwillingness to walk under a ladder, horror at the sight of two knives crossed on

a dinner-table—these may almost be dignified as folk-lore. Some people decline to live in a house numbered 13, preferring to style it 12A. Hostesses suffer unspeakable agonies if, owing to the failure of one guest or the unexpected arrival of another, they find themselves obliged to sit down thirteen to dinner. Even so thorough a man of the world as Bishop Wilberforce thought it worth while to note in his diary for April 1873, 'Dined Grillion's (13),' and some robust believers were inclined to connect his sudden death three months later with the dreaded numeral. So these grand old crusted superstitions hold their own, and year by year we add new ones or revive ancient ones to keep them company. Zadkiel and Old Moore are habitually quoted. Graphiology is held in high repute. At bazaars for the enrichment of churches fashionable women perform feats of palmistry for which a ragged beggar would be sent to prison. We tell one another's fortunes with coffee-grounds, and invite evening parties for the express purpose of gazing into crystals. Table-turning has been a little discounted since the days of 'Mr. Sludge, the Medium,' but spiritualism, in a form less crudely mechanical, and therefore less easy of detection, flourishes perennially.

I lately strayed into a company of spiritualists, who were exchanging experiences over cigarettes and coffee after luncheon. A lorn and serpentine lady,

exactly like Gwendolen in 'Daniel Deronda,' was the principal narrator, and the initiated, sitting round the fire, formed the chorus. As I approached the circle I heard some such words as these:

'I was sitting alone one night, and I suddenly heard *that rap*. You know the rap I mean?'

Chorus: 'Oh, perfectly, perfectly; no one who has once heard it can ever mistake it.'

'Well, I replied to the rapper, and asked who he was and what he wanted, and he answered: "I am your master." That was awful. I shuddered all over, and I could scarcely command my voice to ask his name. He replied "John William," and I was quite bewildered. Who was John William, and what right had he to call himself my master? And it was not till some time afterwards that I remembered that my late husband's Christian names were John William. You see, I always spoke of him and thought of him as Lord Nozoo, and so I had been talking to him without recognizing him. Wasn't that strange?'

This brilliant passage of spiritual dialogue, in which I have only changed the names, gave immense satisfaction to the assembled seers, and I was severely frowned on when I ventured to suggest that there must have been something amiss with the machinery which enabled one to talk to one's nearest relations without recognizing them.

There are well-known people in Society who have lived in luxury for many years by telling ghost-stories in darkened rooms after five-o'clock tea. The Haunted House in Berkeley Square and the Secret Chamber of Glamis Castle are themes of perennial interest, and the anecdotist who professes to know the secret of either will never lack listeners. Bishop Wilberforce had a splendid story about the ghost of a priest, and a sliding panel, and a concealed confession; but, after it had thrilled unnumbered country houses, he unkindly avowed that he had invented it in order to test the credulity of his hearers. Archbishop Benson, a man of less humour, used to narrate his own dreams with the most portentous solemnity, and laid it down that it was impossible to disbelieve in the apparitions of friends at the moment of death unless we rejected everything that rests on testimony. An extremely intelligent man, the librarian of one of the best-known clubs in London, once insisted on quarrelling with me because I attributed certain tappings on the wall which had disturbed his nursery-maid's sleep to the troubadour-like tendencies of the policeman.

But, if these kinds of superstition are merely ludicrous, some others are definitely harmful. I have known a brilliant lad whose health was permanently injured by a hypnotic experiment to which he had been subjected in his schooldays; and I fancy that most doctors could

tell tales of nerves shattered, and brains disordered, by these morbid dealings with the weird and the occult. Staying in a country house notoriously given over to superstition of every type and tendency, I once met a lady who professed to be the 'spiritual wife' of a famous author, and had actually given up home, husband, and children in order to pursue her Affinity. But nobody was the least shocked, and people seemed to be a great deal more interested in her doings than if she had remained a wife in the more commonplace acceptation of the term.

When Thackeray described the follies of Society as he knew it, he used to assign a prominent place to homœopathy. Lady Blanche Fitzague, if I remember aright, wore a picture of Hahnemann in her bracelet and a lock of Priessnitz's hair in a brooch; and I myself have known people in Society who ruled their whole life by the 'Shilling Guide to Homœopathy and Health' and doctored their moral as well as their physical ailments with appropriate globules. I would not for the world insult an honest conviction, but, at the risk of seeming uncharitable, I must confess that 'Christian Science' appears to me about as Christian as it is scientific; and that to expose a bronchitic baby to a north-east wind with snow in it is conduct which reminds one of Herod or the Peculiar People. A gentleman whose family were given to

occultism was taken suddenly and seriously ill. The family summoned, in addition to the local practitioner, a clairvoyante and a vegetarian. The clairvoyante went into a trance and said the patient would die, and then, recovering her consciousness, said that there was nothing the matter with him; so her testimony, though valuable (and highly paid for), was inconclusive. The local practitioner shook his head, looked grave, talked of exhaustion, and prescribed the strongest beef-tea. As soon as his back was turned, the vegetarian adviser threw the beef-tea down the sink and administered a sustaining composition of apple-juice and water. Presently the patient died, and his family, though I believe they were sincerely attached to him, were comforted in their sorrow by the thought that the clairvoyante had predicted this issue when she was in her trance, and that therefore spiritual science had proved right after all. I have always regretted that I have had no opportunity of discussing the case with the local practitioner.

Not many years ago a well-known ecclesiastic was translated from a rural diocese to one which brought him into the Metropolitan area. He had always regarded the British aristocracy with a dog-like devotion, which his admirers called chivalric and his critics servile. In his rural diocese he had admired smart Society at a distance, but now he saw it at close

quarters, and he was honestly amazed at the apparent indifference to every form of religious faith and duty. 'What do these people believe in?' he asked in his bewilderment, and was not a little shocked when the answer was—'Nothing.' Of course all concise and emphatic statements of that kind are exaggerations. It would be stupid to translate them literally. Dr. Johnson spoke with proper scorn of the dull man who, when the Doctor said there was no fruit in the orchard, replied that there were two apples and a pear. 'I say, pooh! sir. There is no fruit in that orchard!' So, if anyone should tell me that he knows some sincerely religious people in Society, I should not dispute the statement, but should maintain that it did not conflict with the general truth that Society as a whole believes in nothing. It is not conceivable that intelligent men and women really believe in the lore of spooks and star-gazings and lines of life. They do not believe in it, but they cultivate it; and in so doing they manage to gratify that ineradicable instinct which, when it is not elevated into faith, descends into credulity.

XXIII

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

A HUNDRED years ago Beilby Porteous, Bishop of London, published a volume of Lent Lectures, and he said in the preface that they were delivered because 'the state of the kingdom—political, moral, and religious—was so unfavourable as to excite the most serious alarm in every mind of reflection.' What Bishop Porteous said in 1801 Bishop Winnington-Ingram might, I believe, have said with equal truth in 1901. The 'mind of reflection' which utters itself in these chapters has already expressed its opinion about the political state of the kingdom. A word remains to be said about morality and religion. I leave out of sight (though by no means out of mind) the poor, because adequately to discuss their religious and moral condition would require a huge sociological apparatus of statistics and deductions. I say nothing of the Great Middle Class, because my loved and honoured master, Mr. Matthew Arnold, made that tempting subject his own. No one admitted more

cordially than he the religiousness and the morality of the middle class, and no one saw more clearly its limitations. 'So grossly imperfect,' he said, 'so false was the Puritan conception and presentation of righteousness—so at war with the ancient and inbred integrity, piety, good-nature, and good-humour of the English people—that it led straight to moral anarchy, the profligacy of the Restoration. It led to the Court, the manners, the stage, the literature which we know. . . . It led, amongst that middle class where religion still lived on, to a narrowness, an intellectual poverty almost incredible. They entered the prison of Puritanism and had the key turned upon their spirit there for two hundred years. It led to that character of their steady and respectable life which makes one shiver—its hideousness, its immense *ennui*.'

Leaving, then, the Middle Class where Mr. Arnold left it, I turn to that class or caste which calls itself and is called 'Smart Society,' and here I frankly say that, as far as I know, it has no religion. Mr. Gladstone used to tell a pleasant tale of Lord Melbourne, who heard by chance a rousing sermon about Christian life and duty. Burning with just indignation at the insistence of the preacher, the old Whig exclaimed, 'No one has a more sincere respect for the Church than I have; but I think things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade the sphere of

private life.' What Lord Melbourne thus expressed, smart Society thinks; and as it thinks, so it acts. It keeps the sphere of its private life absolutely free from the invading forces of religion. Of inner sentiments and things unseen of course I do not presume to say a word. But things which do not appear must be treated as if they did not exist, and I am dealing exclusively with outward observances. Let me break anywhere into my subject and take my instances almost at haphazard.

The observance of Sunday. This, when I first knew Society, though it varied in strictness, was universal. Now it hardly exists. Smart people in London generally go away from Saturday till Monday, and, in the country houses where they spend their 'week-ends,' Sunday is completely secularized. The keener spirits play Bridge in the garden, and in the evening billiards and cards have effectually displaced those Ivory Letters which were the extreme limit of the gaiety permitted by our fathers. For servants, on the other hand, Sunday is a day of unending labour. Old-fashioned people used to have cold dinner on Sunday, in order to diminish the pressure on the kitchen; or, if nature revolted against that regimen, the hot meal was cut down to its smallest dimensions. To-day, whatever of Sunday is not occupied with exercise, is given to meals. The early cup of tea, not

without accompaniments, is followed by a breakfast which in quantity and quality resembles a dinner and is served any time from ten to twelve. A good many people breakfast in their own rooms, and 'do themselves,' as the phrase is, uncommonly well there. Luncheon has long been a dinner, excepting only soup. The *menu* is printed in white and gold, and coffee and liqueurs are prolonged till within measureable distance of tea. Tea is tea and a great deal besides—cakes, sandwiches, potted meat, poached eggs; and, perhaps, in its season, a bleeding woodcock. A little jaded by these gastronomical exertions, and only partially recruited by its curfew game of tennis, Society puts off its dinner till nine, and then sits down with an appetite which has gained keenness by delay. Drinks of all descriptions circulate in the smoking-room and the billiard-room, and Monday morning is well advanced before the last servant gets to bed. Besides all this demand on the kitchen staff, the butler, and the footmen, it is to be borne in mind that the stables are at work all day, and that ladies' maids and valets live in a whirl of packing and unpacking, dressing and undressing; for a self-respecting woman will adapt her costumes to the day's successive pursuits, and a smart boy changes his clothes as often as a pretty girl. The few people who stay in London on Sunday compensate themselves for their stationariness by doing all they

can in the way of society—parading in the Park, calling on their friends, dining at hotels or suburban clubs. Everyone has a luncheon-party on Sunday, and it is a favourite night for dinners. In the early days of the Tractarian movement Lord Houghton complained that his young friend Mr. W. E. Gladstone would not attend parties on Sunday evening, but made Sunday, as well as Friday, into a fast. The Ritualists of the present day have entirely emancipated themselves from that tradition, and, though on Friday they fast on whitebait and lobster-salad and curried eggs, they assert the great Catholic principle that Sunday is a feast, and a remarkably good feast they make of it.

Church-going is, of course, a department of the observance of Sunday, and it has pretty nearly gone with the rest. The leaders of fashion, as far as I can observe, do not go to church at all. Either they 'think it all so silly,' as the wife of a Liberal statesman said to the Archbishop about the service in chapel which precedes dinner at Lambeth Palace; or they are too much fatigued by the social labours of the preceding week; or they want to look through their housekeeping-books or their betting-books; or they cannot spare the time from Bridge. It is currently said that some very great ladies, wishing to combine their own freedom with a proper example to the lower orders, always carry Prayer-books when they walk in

the Park before luncheon on Sunday. It looks well, and it imposes no burden.

But though the leaders of Society have thus completely delivered themselves from the tyranny of church-going, the led still carry some links of the broken chain. Very smart women can struggle to an 11.30 service where the music is good and the performance does not last more than an hour; and the reign of the popular preacher is not yet quite at an end. But it does not do for the preacher to strain his authority. An incumbent of a proprietary chapel in Mayfair ventured to ask a single woman, who was the richest member of his congregation, whether she could not manage with fewer than three footmen under her butler, and give what she saved in wages to a fund for the sick and poor. Disdaining to submit to priestcraft in any form, this good woman 'removed her hassock' and discontinued her subscriptions. The incumbent, no longer able to meet the expenses of the chapel, was forced to resign, and is now meditating on the dangerous consequences of 'allowing religion to invade the sphere of private life.' Lord Melbourne points the moral from his grave.

It would carry me out of my proper line if I were to discuss what are called the 'fashionable' churches of London and enquire how far they are justly obnoxious to that distressing title, and on what grounds it rests.

The theme is rather a tempting one, but digressions I eschew. I will confine my observations to the Chapel Royal. This indeed is generally full, and of 'the best people,' and the reasons are manifold. In the first place, the Chapel is exceedingly small, and a congregation which in an ordinary church would 'rattle about like a pea in a canister fills the little fane to overflowing. Then the service complies with all the requirements of fashionable devotion, for it is very late, very short, and very musical. Again, the Chapel is an official sanctuary: none but peers and M.P.s and magnates of various kinds have a right to worship in it, and therefore it gives a certain stamp of importance or authority to all who worship, even by sufferance, within its walls. And, above all else, there is a chance of seeing Royalty at close quarters. In Lady Granville's Letters there is a pleasing story of a young Duc de Rohan who, when complimented on his beautiful expression, admitted the soft impeachment, saying 'Oui, mais il faudrait me voir quand je prie;' and there is a peculiar satisfaction in contemplating the illustrious as well as the beautiful of the earth when engaged in the offices of devotion. All rules have their exception, and the repugnance of smart Society to public worship is qualified in the instance of the Chapel Royal.

Mr. Gladstone was wont to describe people who

attended divine service only once on Sunday as 'Once-ers.' In his view every respectable person should be a 'Twice-er;' and he himself was not seldom a 'Thrice-er.' It would puzzle the most careful observer to find a 'Twice-er' in smart Society. With the cessation of church-going has come the cessation of Family Prayers; but this is a subject which belongs more particularly to social life in the country. I am now thinking of life in London, and here the most notable change in private observance is the abandonment of grace before meals. Bishop Wilberforce used to tell a story of a greedy clergyman who when asked to say grace looked anxiously to see if there were champagne-glasses on the table. If there were, he began, 'Bountiful Jehovah!' But if he saw only claret-glasses he said, 'We are not worthy of the least of Thy mercies.' Good, natural man! By this time no doubt he rests in peace, and I confess that I do not wish him back again; for the hurried benediction, half heard in the tumult of opening conversation and subsiding guests, was a form of piety which did not tend to edification.

XXIV

SOCIETY AND SUNDAY

In my last chapter, when describing a 'week-end' in a country house, I said: 'Whatever of Sunday is not occupied with exercise is given to meals.' Let it be borne in mind that, as I explicitly stated, I was dealing only with what is termed 'Smart Society.' Of this class, birth and rank and station are mere accidents; they do not belong to the essence of Smartness. People may have the grandest names and the longest pedigrees and not be the least 'smart.' They may fill the greatest offices in Politics or Administration, in Law or Army, but such offices will avail nothing towards Smartness. Even wealth is not of the essence of the matter; you may be enormously rich and yet pre-eminently dowdy. Obviously there must be a nucleus of rich people to bear the monstrous cost of this elaborate and incessant entertaining, but the smart horde which subsists upon their bounty may be people of the most exiguous income. A gentleman who had acquired great wealth in trade and then

transmogrified himself into a Highland chief was for many years the mainstay of the smart set, and in return for his unbounded hospitality he was always called 'The Provider.' Well, it requires a substantial fortune to be a provider for the cormorants of Society; but you can be a very good consumer on £300 a year, and be exceedingly 'smart' at the same time. 'How do they do it?' is the cry of the uninitiated. Well, there are various and most ingenious ways. Married couples find it more dificult, and are reduced to such common expedients as dealing at the Stores with other people's tickets, keeping their tradesmen in good temper by small payments on account, drinking tea at home when they cannot dine out, getting rid of their servants when the season ends, and spending the half-year between August and February in an unbroken succession of visits to their friends' country houses—like a worthy couple who were called 'The Stay-makers,' or a keen but impecunious sportsman who, with his wife, was universally recognized as 'The Curse of Scotland.'

But for a single man it is very easy to be 'smart' on nothing. His servant's wages and his railway fares are the only expenses which he meets with ready money. By a little judicious management he can get his luncheon and dinner for nothing pretty nearly every day. If he is so unlucky as to have no dinner-invitation,

he improves his health with a bicycle-ride and goes to bed when he comes in; gets up at 11 P.M., has his bath, dresses, and goes to a ball, where he has a snack in the tea-room and dines off the ball-supper at one in the morning. 'Soup and cutlets, topped up with cold chicken and lobster salad on one plate—that's four courses and only looks like three,' was the 'straight tip' of a youth who had known various shifts. Champagne in buckets can be had all the evening for the asking, and a sandwich and a brandy-and-soda at 3 A.M. sends our hero comfortably home to his well-earned rest.

Such, then, is smart Society, and, limiting my observations to it, I think that the sentence which I quoted may stand without alteration. 'Whatever of Sunday is not occupied with exercise is given to meals.' Let me pursue the theme into detail; and first of the exercise. Here is one of the most signal departures from traditional custom. I perfectly remember a time when a walk on Sunday afternoon to the kitchen-garden or the home-farm was the only form of exercise permitted. Even children were not allowed to run or shout or play. I have known a schoolboy scolded for giving an apple to his pony. Only 'Sunday books' might be read; others were put away on Saturday evening. No newspaper might enter the doors. Drawing and needlework were crimes which

might be expected to bring the chandelier down upon one's guilty head. Even the piano might not be opened, except to accompany hymn-singing after dinner or at family prayers. This was indeed what Mr. Arnold called the 'Prison of Puritanism,' and a great portion of the aristocracy was as securely locked into it as the middle class itself. Now has come the reaction. The moment breakfast is over, the 'week-end' party will divide itself into two sections. The keener spirits betake themselves to cards, and eagerly win or patiently lose their money till the gong goes for luncheon. It is a fascinating picture, but may be more suitably criticized when I come to gambling.

While the money-spinners are sorting their cards under the cedar-tree, the more wholesome natures are laying their plans of exercise. If there are any hacks available, a riding party will be organized. A procession of carriages and traps will come to the door directly after luncheon, and bowl the party over to tea at a ten-mile-distant neighbour's. A troop of bicycles (the cleaning of which has become a serious element in the economy of a country house) whirls down the avenue. If we are near a river, a peaceful afternoon may be spent in a punt, or a hard-hearted young lady compels her swains to bend their unwilling backs to the laborious oar. Lawn-tennis is no

longer a passion, but it has its uses as a freshener of the appetite; and those of us who are no longer quite as young as we were toddle cheerfully round the croquet-ground. If it happens to be wet, the votaries of Bridge and Whist are reinforced. Billiards and Pool are better than doing nothing; and even Ping-Pong has its heroes and its victims, its failures and its triumphs. No one would give a ball on Sunday evening; but if you have a lot of boys and girls in the house, and the gallery-floor happens to be polished, there can be no harm in the Washington Post; and really Freddy Du Cane plays waltzes so beautifully that it would be a sin to waste his talents.

So much for exercise. Let me turn now to meals. Here again the contrast between country houses as I first remember them and country houses to-day is sufficiently startling. In strict houses no extra-mural hospitality could be given or accepted on Sunday. If you had people staying with you, they knew what to expect and accommodated themselves to it. Meals were scrupulously regulated so as to allow of the servants going to church, and the cooking was reduced to a minimum. In a stately castle not a hundred miles from Manchester there was no hot food on Sunday, except eggs at breakfast, and soup and potatoes at dinner. A Sunday *menu*, written by a cook whose

education was finished before the School Board was established, is still affectionately remembered in a family with which I am connected:

Soup
Cold Beef
Salad
Cold Sweats

Of course such rigidity was exceptional; but simplicity in Sunday meals was an all but universal rule. Lately I sketched in broad outline the system which has taken the place of this rather Spartan diet. Let me now turn the sketch into a more finished picture, and, as in the matter of exercise, give some details about meals. An Illustrious Couple arranged to pay a two-nights' visit to a country house of which the owners were friends of mine. For reasons of expediency we will call the visitors the Duke and Duchess, though that was not their precise rank. When a thousand preparations, too elaborate to be described here, had been made for the due entertainment of them and their suite and their servants, the Private Secretary wrote to the lady of the house enclosing a written memorandum of his master's and mistress's requirements in the way of meals. I reproduce the substance of the memorandum—and in these matters my memory never plays tricks. The day began with cups of tea brought to the bedroom. While the Duke was dressing,

an egg beaten up in sherry was served to him not once, but twice. The Duke and Duchess breakfasted together in their private sitting-room, where the usual English breakfast was provided. They had their luncheon with their hosts and the house-party, and ate and drank like other people. Particular instructions were given that at five-o'clock tea there must be something substantial in the way of eggs, sandwiches, or potted meat, and this meal the Illustrious couple consumed with special gusto. Dinner was at 8.30, on the limited and abbreviated scale which has superseded the hecatombs of Francatelli. But let no one suppose that the Illustrious Ones went hungry to bed. When they retired, supper was brought up to them in their private sitting-room, and a cold chicken and a bottle of claret were left in their bedroom as a provision against emergencies.

Now be it borne in mind that I have been writing about 'smart' Society, and that smart Society takes its cue in every department of life from the centre round which it moves. Of course there are infinite varieties of detail. Even in smart Society people differ as to the amount of food which they can manage, the sort they prefer, and the times and circumstances of eating it. Thus I have known a man who ate eggs and bacon in bed at 10 A.M., and a lady who drank consommé while she was having her

hair brushed at night. But, making all allowance for discrepancies and idiosyncrasies, I feel confident that I have not exaggerated the gastronomical capacities of the admirable class which I have been describing.

XXV

CHARITY, CREDIT, AND CARDS

I ONCE asked, with reference to a youth who had been launched on the world directly after he left Eton, what he was going to do; and the answer, made by a young man about town, was, 'Oh! he has joined the Profession.' 'What profession?' the unsophisticated outsider might enquire, and the reply could not be conveyed in a single word. 'The Profession' meant in those days, and for all I know means still, the nomad tribe of impecunious youths who, being too indolent to follow any recognized avocation, lived on Charity and Credit, their own wits and the witlessness of their friends. I have already described the fine art of getting your food and clothing for nothing and your lodging for very little. Those are the departments of Charity and Credit, and have been time out of mind the legitimate resources of idle and impecunious youth. There is an excellent Order of Roman Catholic ladies called 'The Little Sisters of the Poor,' who beg alms and broken meat from door to door. A

graceless but amusing youth, a younger son of a great family, used to call himself and his congeners 'The Little Brothers of the Rich,' and declared that their pitiful and destitute condition appealed irresistibly to the kind hearts of Belgravia and Mayfair. 'Why, dash it all! my eldest brother has got fifty thousand a year, and I have five hundred. That by itself is enough to draw tears from a stone. No wonder they stand me a bit of grub and a drop of fizz. They'd be a stony-hearted crowd if they didn't. My brother's shooting is so ghastly bad that he may keep it to himself; and I've got some decentish pals in Scotland. So I'm all right from August to Christmas. Tradesmen? Why, I always tell 'em they get every mag I possess, so its sheer unreasonableness to ask for more—like a blooming kid crying for the moon, you know.' Such are the mild philosophies of Charity and Credit as expounded by one who had probed them to their depths.

But when it comes to 'living on one's wits,' as the phrase is, the art becomes more precarious. Almost all moral restrictions have been relaxed by smart Society, but cheating at cards still remains an unpardonable offence, and Society is even remarkably vindictive in punishing the offender. According to a tradition which I received from the whist-players of my youth, there are three hundred English gentlemen wandering in destitution about the continent of Europe

because they wouldn't lead trumps when they had five; and to this band of blameless exiles must be added some bearers of aristocratic names who, in my own time, have been detected in cheating at cards and have paid the penalty.

The absolute cheat has as a rule a short life, though perhaps a merry one. Suspicion is aroused; precautions are taken; exposure, ruin, and flight complete the tale. The Baccarat case of 1891 is not yet forgotten, and I well remember an earlier tragedy where a man's habitual companions and lifelong friends formed themselves into a committee to watch his play. Day and night for weeks they maintained their scrutiny and took notes of what they saw. The notes were not compared, but were handed separately to a criminal lawyer, and his opinion was a sentence of social death. Much greater villains than that card-sharper have incurred much lighter penalties.

But outside the very narrow band of actual and detectable cheats there is a fringe or zone of acute practitioners whom Harry Foker describes with perfect exactness. 'They'll beat you, my boy, even if they play on the square, which I don't say they don't—nor which I don't say they do, mind. But *I* wouldn't play with 'em. You're no match for 'em. You ain't up to their weight.' A gentleman of this type married his daughter to a very rich man. Papa used to stay a

great deal with the young couple—which was very nice for everyone—and, for fear his daughter should be dull in the long, quiet evenings, he thoughtfully taught her Ecarté. When she had learnt the game, Papa said: 'Now, my darling, you are quite good enough to play for money,' and, during his visit he won from her a sum which necessitated recourse to his son-in-law. The son-in-law betrayed unreasonable irritation; but Papa lived respected and died lamented. The gentle art of 'living on one's wits' includes devices more delicate and less perilous than these. Time out of mind ladies have claimed all the honours at whist, and, where their adversaries were shy or careless, they have not seldom derived profit from the claim. The worthy couple whom I described as 'The Staymakers' used to arrange with one of their sons to meet them in hospitable country houses. When the whist-tables were made up, father, mother, and son used to sit down and entice some unwary youth to be the fourth. The points were moderate—shillings and half-crowns—but whichever way the luck went, a greater or less sum was bound to find its way into the coffers of the family. A hard-bitten old man of the world used to take a grim delight in pocketing the sovereigns of younger sons and clerks in public offices, saying as he did so, with a savage grin, 'There's no pleasure in winning money from a man who doesn't feel it.' I

recollect a very ancient dame who loved cards better than life itself, and was undone when, staying in a Scotch house on Sunday, she found herself debarred on Sabbatical grounds from her quotidian rubber. In high dudgeon she retired to her room and played Patience on the bed, till a Presbyterian housemaid, who found her engaged in her unhallowed rites, ran down, horror-struck, to the servants' hall and reported that the old lady from London was playing cards with the devil.

Now be it observed that these old practitioners had their distinct use in the great scheme of 'The Profession.' They performed the part of tutors and governors. They initiated the neophyte. They trained the apprentice. Very soon the ingenuous youth who aspired to live comfortably on nothing, if he was only fairly 'quick at the up-take,' acquired the art from those who had practised it so long and so successfully. His fingers got rapped in the process, but he bore the pain with 'cheery stoicism,' and very soon was ready to perform on his juniors. I once knew a very smart and handsome young couple who married, as the phrase goes, 'on nothing.' It was obvious that they could not afford to live in London; and after some prolonged visitations to their friends' country houses they settled down at Woolwich. 'Why Woolwich?' everyone asked. The answer was forthcoming when we learned that they used to give

nice little evening parties at which the Woolwich cadets were encouraged to play round games for money. The idea of setting up housekeeping on the pocket-money of babes and sucklings would probably not have occurred to anyone who had not been through the social mill.

Most people know some fashionable couples who eke out a rather narrow income by Poker and Bridge. It is calculated by the friends who have the pleasure of losing to them that they make several hundreds a year; but no one ever dreams of suggesting unfair play. Luck is pretty equally distributed; but skill, courage, and facial control are qualities which succeed at cards as elsewhere; and a great advantage of playing in your own house is that the party can be broken up as soon as the hostess feels tired or the host has had enough of it. Bridge has of course been the absorbing passion of the last few years. People who play it well and don't mind losing their money can climb without difficulty into the highest circles. One of the most conspicuous of our great ladies is known to her friends as 'Ponte Vecchia;' and Lord Salisbury's curious aloofness from the world suggested the story that he said he really must learn Bridge, for then he might have an opportunity of getting to know his colleague Lord Turf.

My latest information is that Bridge is a little

losing its vogue. Steady-going folks are reverting to Whist, and those who enjoy a little 'flutter' are saying that, after all's said and done, there's nothing like good old Poker. Of course there remain the more serious forms of gambling which have the Stock Exchange for their centre, and of the political influence which these exercise I shall speak anon. But they do not concern my present theme, which is the art of living on nothing. Betting is an inexhaustible topic, and the Racing Woman, as a figure in the social life of the present day, deserves a whole chapter to herself. The worship of the horse is no doubt a prolific parent of villainy; but a mind earnestly set on outwitting its neighbours can find a good many openings without the assistance of the racecourse. For example, there is the method of betting on a certainty. This, when practised with an artistic assumption of mere belief, has been known to produce the happiest results. The schoolboy's threefold asseveration is, or used to be: 'Will you take your oath?' 'Yes.' 'Will you take your solemn dying oath?' 'Yes.' 'Will you bet sixpence?' 'NO.' In the same spirit I have known an adult millionaire whose sole test of truth was: 'Would you bet a sum of money which it would be inconvenient to you to lose?' A wily sportsman once induced a band of intoxicated boon-companions to bet some sums of money which it was very inconvenient to them to lose

on the spelling of the word 'reindeer.' The sportsman, happening to know that Dr. Johnson spelt it *raindeer*, fixed Johnson's Dictionary as the standard, and won his money. A young gentleman of some fashion attained by incessant practice a remarkable skill in leaping high objects with a short run. He used to call on new acquaintances, turn the conversation to jumping, back himself to clear some piece of furniture in the room, and pocket the money of the incredulous. I myself, in younger and gayer days, have seen a substantial sum won in a country house from a military gentleman who insisted that 'My name is Norval' was in Shakespeare. But he rushed on his fate, and, purist as I am, I cannot find it in my heart to condemn the winner.

XXVI

SOCIAL JOURNALISM

I HAVE been describing some of the devices by which a luxurious, but indigent, Society tries to make or save money, and, failing either resort, to live without it. Now I should like to say a word about what may be called Social Journalism. Of course this has nothing to do with the really literary work of people in, or connected with, Society. The Republic of Letters is not an unmeaning phrase, and well-connected people have before now written very readable books. Queen Victoria was, as Lord Beaconsfield said, the Head of the Literary Profession. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century there were Lady Charlotte Bury, Lady Anne Hamilton, Lady Theresa Lewis, Lady Nairne, and Miss Eden. In more modern times we have had the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Leeds, Lady Lindsay, Lady Ridley, and Miss Cholmondeley. And these accomplished ladies have had for their partners in the literary dance such writers as Lord John Russell, Lord Stanhope, Lord

John Manners, the two Lord Lyttons, the Duke of Argyll, Sir George Trevelyan, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Crewe. Of every one enumerated in these lists it may be safely said that he or she made some distinct and remembered contribution to the literature of the time, but it is not of such that I am thinking. My present concern is with those persons, male or female, who subsist, either in whole or in part, by describing the doings of Society. They are not, as a rule, 'blasted with poetic fire,' and they seldom attempt the constructive labour of Fiction. They present their wares in the less exacting form of 'snapshots' and 'sketches,' jottings and cuttings, 'breezy' paragraphs and personal impressions. Such is the substance of Social Journalism, and as I sit down to criticize it the still small voice of conscience reminds me of a just rebuke administered by the present Archbishop of Canterbury, when Bishop of London, to a prominent incumbent of his diocese. This incumbent, a comfortable and well-placed dignitary who had been a hot Ritualist in his youth, was complaining to his diocesan about the lawlessness of the younger clergy. The Bishop answered, with a grim smile, 'You only say that because you are getting old. When you were as young as they are, you were just as lawless yourself.' But I drug my conscience and proceed.

It is common to speak of the Social Journalism which we know and condemn as if it were a new

product of this decadent age. But this is not the fact. The 'Times' has recently been showing us, by extracts from its 'dead self' of 1801, that a hundred years ago the Leading Journal by no means disdained the spicy personalities of private and social life. In the earlier part of the century 'The Satirist' and 'John Bull' were to the full as impertinent and as personal as the 'Classy Cuttings' of to-day. A choice specimen of Social Journalism as practised by 'The Age' may be found in Chapter VI of the first volume of Greville's Memoirs. Sydney Smith in the 'Edinburgh Review' never shrank from personalities, and thought it quite fair to discredit Canning's policy by ridiculing the poverty of his cousins. One of Albany Fonblanque's papers in the 'Examiner' contains an amusing skit on the Social Journalism of the time and its microscopic enquiry into the private habits of the Duke of Wellington. 'The Duke generally rises at about eight. Before he gets out of bed he commonly pulls off his nightcap, and while he is dressing he sometimes whistles a tune and occasionally damns his valet. The Duke uses warm water in shaving, and lays on a greater quantity of lather than ordinary men. While shaving he chiefly breathes through his nose, with a view, as is conceived, of keeping the suds out of his mouth. The Duke drinks tea for breakfast, which he sweetens with white sugar and corrects with cream.

He eats toast and butter, cold ham, beef, or eggs; *the eggs are generally those of the common domestic fowl.* At eleven o'clock, if the weather is fine, the Duke's horse is brought to the door. The Duke's horse on these occasions is always saddled and bridled. The Duke's daily manner of mounting his horse is the same that it was on the morning of the glorious battle of Waterloo. He drops his right foot into the stirrup, puts his horse to a walk, and seldom falls off, being an admirable equestrian.' This form of descriptive journalism has plenty of imitators at the present hour, but the grossness and brutality which had disfigured social satire faded away as the century advanced. The period of Queen Victoria's married life—roughly from 1840 to 1860—was the Golden Age of English Society, and the influence of the Court was felt in the temper of the newspapers which Society encouraged. But, after the Prince Consort's death and the Queen's retirement, the guidance of Society passed to other hands; or rather there was no guidance, and men and women did that which was right in their own eyes. One of the earliest signs of the changed order was the revival of Social Journalism. The coarser features of the older dispensation were purged away. There was (at first) no scandal and very little impertinence. It was journalism written by people inside the charmed circle of Society for the amusement of

their friends and comrades. The Imperial idea of dazzling the vulgar herd outside by the intimate description of unattainable magnificence had not yet dawned upon the minds of English gentlefolk. Social Journalism on the new and improved model began in 1864 with 'The Owl.' Among the contributors were names which have since become famous in greater transactions. The idea of 'The Owl' was that it should be written by gentlemen for gentlemen. The contributors were bound to make no money by their work. When all the expenses of production had been paid, they gave a whitebait-dinner at Greenwich, each inviting several ladies. The remaining balance was spent in gifts of jewellery and flowers for the bewitching guests. The scope of the bright little magazine was well indicated by Sir George Trevelyan in his brilliant extravaganza 'The Ladies in Parliament:'—

'When at sunset, chill and dark,
Sunset thins the swarming park,
Bearing home his social gleaning—
Jests and riddles fraught with meaning,
Scandals, anecdotes, reports,—
Seeks The Owl a maze of courts
Which, with aspect towards the west,
Fringe the street of Sainted James,
Where a warm, secluded nest
As his sole domain he claims;
From his wing a feather draws,
Shapes for use a dainty nib,
Pens his parody or squib;

Combs his down and trims his claws,
And repairs where windows bright
Flood the sleepless Square with light.'

In brief, 'The Owl' was the work of a small knot of clever, well-born, well-to-do young men, bachelors living in London, going a great deal into Society, and reproducing, in gentlemanlike and sometimes scholar-like English, the seeings, hearings, and doings of their active days and festive evenings. It had a great and deserved success; and then, like wise fellows, its founders brought it to an end. They went, one to his farm and another to his merchandise, some to their politics and some to their professions. Most of them married wives, and several inherited estates; and the torch of Social Journalism, which they had relit and purified, passed to other hands.

Those were the great days of the 'Saturday Review.' Its scope had originally been political, theological, and literary. Now it opened its doors to social matters, and the 'Frisky Matron' and the 'Girl of the Period' were recognized as marking a new stage in Social Journalism. Speculation was keenly on the alert about the writer's identity. We know it now; but then it was a literary secret which ranked with the authorship of Junius's Letters. Lord Salisbury, as Lord Robert Cecil, had been a diligent and brilliant journalist in the days when the 'Quarterly Review' paid a hundred

guineas for a good article. Lady Robert Cecil, one of the cleverest women of her time, was believed to be a constant contributor to the 'Saturday Review:' and to-day the Prime Minister of England will, with fine pride, point out among the treasures of glorious Hatfield the old writing-table on which, in those distant days, so much good work was produced. Knowing people jumped to the conclusion that Lady Salisbury had drawn the 'Frisky Matron' and the 'Girl of the Period,' and, though the knowing ones were absolutely wrong, the success of the new Social Journalism was assured.

'The Owl's' own life had been short, but it lived again in a host of descendants; and the huge family of Social newspapers which have appeared during the last thirty years can claim descent, more or less direct, from that prolific bird. In 1869 the 'Queen's Messenger' became notorious for an outrage on the sanctity of private life which is duly reported on page 876 of 'Annals of Our Time.' In 1874 the 'World' began its career as 'a journal for men and women.' In 1877 'Truth' set out on its blameless course, concealing in Latin the virtuous boast that Subscribers to 'Truth' are the Foes of Fraud. The imitations of the 'World' and 'Truth' are, as the sands of the seashore, innumerable. Some of them are professedly and ostensibly devoted to the

doings of Society and nothing else; others, more steady-going, give a page or two to rather platitudinous politics, and then turn with an air of obvious relief to wallow in Society. Even religious journals have a column 'Mainly Wrong about People,' and sandwich paragraphs about 'Chiffon' and Rotten Row between Dr. Dingaway's Sermon on Predestination and 'A Young Methodist's' letter on the Itineration of Wesleyan Preachers. I once read the report of a religious conference in a country house, which, after several columns of spiritual outpouring, concluded by saying, 'The noble host is reputed to enjoy an income of not less than £30,000 a year.'

Between these various forms and degrees of Social Journalism I do not discriminate. I borrow a title from 'A Londoner's Log-book' in the 'Cornhill,' and tumble all the tribe together under the generic heading of 'Classy Cuttings.' The material out of which those cuttings are made, the people who fashion them, and the Society which consumes them, are topics too rich and rare to be dismissed at the fag-end of a chapter already sufficiently prolonged.

XXVII

THE BETTER SORT

I SUFFICIENTLY defined what I mean by Social Journalism. Let me now describe the people who write it and the stuff out of which it is made. And first of the writers. In old days it used to be assumed that paragraphs describing the persons, habits, and movements of great people were contributed to the Press by valets and ladies' maids. If we could search the secrets of newspaper-offices I fancy we should find that this was generally the case. The sort of conversation with which Morgan regaled Major Pendennis would make admirable 'copy' for a 'Society Paper.' Long since Morgan's day, a most sensational suicide in a great house, which had been effectually hushed up by the victim's family, was made public by the action of a servant. That very interesting account of Queen Victoria which was published under the title of 'The Private Life of the Queen' purported to be, and I dare say really was, written 'By one of Her Majesty's servants.' But the servants

no longer have the monopoly of the market, nor even the chief share in it. They have been ousted by a new and dangerous class of competitors, and these victorious rivals are the ladies and gentlemen whom they serve. Let me idealize one of these competitors under the name (borrowed from an excellent novel) of 'Freddy Du Cane,' and then let us see the part which Freddy plays in the production of Social Journalism.

Freddy is well born and well connected. He has near relations in the peerage and in public life. He has heard about Society from his earliest days, and during his holidays he has constantly met at his father's house people whose names are well known to the world. So the nomenclature of diction and habits of Society have been familiar to him from his birth. Then he has been at Public School and at Oxford (somehow I don't think that Cambridge breeds Freddies), where he has made acquaintance with men destined to a career of professional journalism. He is a sharp youth, though not a hard worker or a good scholar, and very likely he has dabbled a little in magazine-writing at school or college. In a long-continued contest of wits with schoolmasters, tutors, and examiners, he has acquired the invaluable art of beating out his gold very thin, and making the very utmost of his knowledge and opportunities. He has taken a degree sufficiently good

to save him from disgrace, though not nearly good enough to secure him a livelihood.

So Freddy leaves Oxford with no particular distinction and no definite profession. Very likely he is called to the Bar, or at least 'eats his dinners;' but this is a mere formality, complied with to pacify 'the Governor,' who is old-fashioned enough to think a profession more respectable than idleness. Freddy has a decent allowance, and there is something tied up on him in the family settlements; because, there is always the last desperate resort of marriage, and girls with 'a little money,' are by no means difficult to find. But in the meanwhile one must live, and, when he has paid the rent of his flat and his club-subscriptions and his servant's wages, and has been through the campaign of a London season, and has visited his friends from Cornwall to Caithness, and has stopped his tailor's mouth with a payment on account, his balance at the bank begins to shrink uncomfortably. The odious little parchment-bound book becomes the most unsatisfactory reading, and perhaps a polite letter from Messrs. Stumpy and Rowdy informs him that he has overdrawn his account and is requested to rectify this trifling error.

Now, if Freddy is by nature or training a sharper, he begins to mend his pecuniary position by some of those doubtful manœuvres which I described in a former

chapter. But if he is an honest lad, as in the main he is, he falls back upon Social Journalism. One of his Oxford friends is on the staff of 'Classy Cuttings,' and introduces him to the editor. 'So you have become one of ——'s hired stabbers,' said Matthew Arnold, with his sweetest smile, to a young friend who had just got his first 'Society' article into a famous weekly. The Season affords Freddy material for countless 'pars.' Who dined with whom, with what flowers the table was decorated, whether the gold plate was used, whether the host wore his Blue Ribbon or only his Star, whether the hostess displayed her famous tiara or her unparalleled pearls—all this makes excellent copy. From dinner Freddy goes to an Evening Party; dull work, but rich with 'pars'—Ambassadors and Orders and Uniforms; the babel of tongues; the sharp distinction between those who have been dining and those who only were asked in the evening; the late division in the Lords, which almost kept Lord Cramlington from his dinner; the debate in the Commons, and what an exhibition Jawkins made of himself—such are the motes which people the air of the Evening Party, and what excellent copy they yield! From the Party to the Ball it is 'roses, roses all the way'—and copy, copy too. The red carpet at the door, the arrival of Royalty, the National Anthem, the salaams of hosts and guests, the flowers on the staircase, the band in

the ballroom, the prettiest girls in London in the smartest frocks, a ripping valse, a princely supper, and a delicious sit-out. And then Freddy nips into a hansom, lights a cigar and pops into his club, where he meets some friends who 'bar' dancing, and have sought their amusement at Theatres and Music Halls, 'Raleighs' and 'Pelicans.' So within six hours he has skimmed the cream off at least four different types of Society; and, walking home in broad daylight, he exchanges a friendly greeting with the policeman, and goes to bed happy in the thought that he has provided for the morrow.

Morning is Freddy's serious time. He does not wake with a 'head,' for he is a clean-living youth, and drunkenness is the sign of a cad; but after eating lobster salad at 2 A.M. he has no particular appetite for breakfast. So he lounges through his refection of strong tea and devilled kidneys, lights his pipe, and sets to work. By one o'clock he has finished his column for 'Classy Cuttings,' and it is time to dress. Dressing is a serious affair both for Freddy and for his servant, and prolonged are the debates about ties and waistcoats, whether those well-cut but much-worn trousers can be creased into presentability; and whether the meteorological conditions indicate varnished boots or blacking. By two o'clock these problems are solved, and Freddy, smart, hungry,

and cheerful, is bowling along to some hospitable house where the hostess is always at home for luncheon. The afternoon is dedicated to Hurlingham or Ranelagh, a garden-party at Osterley or Syon, or a frisky tea in Kensington Gardens. And so, before we know where we are it is eight o'clock again, and every hour which has not been occupied in sleep has yielded its 'par.' The end of July draws near, and Freddy is off to Goodwood, and thence to his tour of the provinces. If he is unusually hard up, he puts into port at the parental home, but this, though comfortable and cheap, yields no material. So, as soon as the parchment-bound book shows the desired balance, Freddy is off on his travels. And now 'pars' rain down like autumn leaves. The date and architecture of each country house in which he stays, the size of the park, the head of deer, the contents of the picture-gallery; how the famous hook-nose came into this family or the heavy jaw into that; whose ancestors were Jacobites and whose Roundheads; the haunted chamber at Coldstone Castle, the gate of Glenacre Park through which the heiress eloped with the highwayman—all this is the most delicious nutriment for those who love the historic and ancestral aspects of Society. But some of our readers prefer the present, and for them Freddy purveys actualities about golf-links and croquet-grounds; how Lady Corisande looks her best on a horse

and Lady Bertha pulls a capital oar; how the Duchess's peculiar breed of ring-tailed screamers is the glory of the aviary, and how the eldest son recently landed a carp which was traditionally reputed to be three centuries old.

And now the shooting season begins, and Freddy, who really cares nothing about sport, has to walk more warily. However, he is not a Cockney. He is quite aware that people do not shoot foxes, and he knows the sporting significance of August 12, September 1, and October 1. And—what is more valuable for journalistic purposes—he knows human nature, and is well aware that no harm can be done by saying that the Stillbrook shoot is one of the best in England, that to walk with young Lord Vaurien across stubbles is to have a lesson in marksmanship, and that, in spite of *anno Domini*, Lord Vieuxbois can show many a younger man how to knock over a rocketer.

But these topics by no means exhaust Freddy's repertory. He is sharp enough to leave women's dress to women-writers, knowing that the man who profanes the mysteries of Bona Dea falls an unwept victim to his own rashness. But on everything that men do, and have, and undergo, he is an informed and competent authority. He will reel off columns about his hosts' acreages and incomes, taking excellent care

not to understate the amount in either case. Oxford has taught him to chatter quite readily about style and culture, the books which smart people are reading, and the topics which they discuss. Personal experiences have made him an excellent judge of cooking, though here he has a competitor in the Writing Woman (who must have a chapter all to herself). Furniture and decoration he can describe like Gillow, and, having had a country home, he understands the slang of a run or a steeplechase. Having, like all young men of the day, a disease and a doctor, he can discourse quite learnedly about health and illness—how Lord Colchicum's gout has reduced him to living on whitings and hot water; how Lady Plethora has been sent to Gastein for a course of lowering treatment; and how her daughter, Miss Anæmia, who was so delicate all last season, has been completely cured by a system of underdone steaks and dialysed iron. And so we work round to Christmas, and go into winter quarters under the paternal roof till February recalls the gay world to London, and the social round begins again.

And now good-bye to Freddy Du Cane. He is not a bad fellow, after all; idle perhaps, and self-indulgent, liking the palm without the dust; enjoying the fruits of money, but loathing the trouble of making it: in spite of his risky art, honourable and upright, averse from giving pain, glad to do a good turn, grateful for kind-

ness, loyal to his friends, a good 'pal,' and a bright companion. After eight or ten years of this nomad life he finds the 'girl with a little money.' They get separated from the rest of their party after dining at the Crystal Palace; or he catches her horse for her when she has an accident in Rotten Row; or she rouges his face when they are dressing for private theatricals. Somehow or another the psychological moment arrives and the fatal word is spoken. Her father makes himself unexpectedly pleasant about settlements, and Freddy's parents present the young couple with a 'bijou residence' in Mayfair or South Kensington. There they entertain Freddy's bachelor friends, and, from the serene heights of a purpose fulfilled and a position secured, Freddy instructs his juniors in the art and craft of social journalism. 'I never should have got thick with my missis if it hadn't been for "Classy Cuttings." She used to read all the tommy rot I shoved in, and she said: "Do you really write all those things signed *Lothario*? How awfully clever of you! It must be nice to know so much." And then I gave her a par to herself, and said she was out-and-out the prettiest girl at Henley; and so the deed was done. Take the tip from me, my son, and stick to "Society Journalism." Considered in the light of "Biz," it takes a lot of beating

XXVIII

THE BASER SORT

FREDDY DU CANE typifies the better sort of Social Journalist, but I have a word to say about the baser sort, and I can find no more descriptive name than that which Thackeray invented long ago for a youth who had offended him—'My dear young literary friend, Tom Garbage.' Of course Freddy and Tom have certain points of resemblance. Both are young, both like enjoying themselves, both are more or less impecunious, both find light and fitful journalism a less laborious form of effort than the drudgery of Commerce or the Bar. Both know by sweet experience that no kind of journalism finds readier acceptance in the native land of snobbery than that which records the sayings and doings, the eatings and drinkings and dancings, of people who bear great names. But there the resemblance ends, and it ends much to the disadvantage of Tom Garbage. The parent Garbages are not, as the phrase is, 'in Society.' They could give their Tom no early initiation into the life and manners which he was

afterwards to describe. He was educated, not at Eton or Harrow, but at Mudport Grammar School, or (like Mr. Arnold's friend Bottles) at Lycurgus House Academy, Peckham. Not for him, on leaving school, were those four delicious years of cultured idleness in the most beautiful of cities which men call an Oxford education and which form our nearest approach to the σχολή of the Athenian citizen. Tom went straight from school into journalism. Fleet Street was the scene of his labours, and an airy attic in the neighbourhood of Gray's Inn Road sheltered his repose.

The experiences of a young journalist's life in London have been too often described to need repetition here. The decisive moment in Tom's career was that which first introduced him to the fringe or outskirts of 'Society.' Very likely this introduction was performed by Freddy Du Cane; for it is a characteristic of the Freddies that they are generally ready to help a fellow-struggler, and, with their own livelihood secured, rather enjoy the fun of initiating an outsider. But sometimes the method of entering Society is less legitimate. Perhaps Tom Garbage drops his visiting-card into the letter-box of some great house where a party is impending, on the off-chance that his name may pass muster in a crowd and an invitation-card may find its way to his modest dwelling. This device has often proved successful. Sometimes he writes a paragraph

about a great man, encloses it in a flattering letter, and, if the great one's special vanity has been dexterously tickled, receives an invitation in return. Then there is the desperate method of going unasked to a big party. In that case Tom Garbage must take his life in his hand, and run the risk of being unceremoniously extruded ; but even this plan sometimes answers. A few years ago a gentleman of Tom's quality presented himself at a huge political party given by a short-sighted statesman. In the miscellaneous throng the stranger passed unheeded, and then came his stroke of genius. Having heard that the statesman never knew even his colleagues by sight, Tom, after making his bow, quietly said, 'Lord ——, would you do me the favour of introducing me to Lady Kew?' His host, much too polite to avow that he did not know one of his guests by sight, hurriedly performed the desired introduction, slurring over the name which he did not know, and walked off, leaving Tom Garbage master of the situation.

But, by whatever process introduced, Tom sooner or later gets his foot inside the charmed circle, and then his social progress, though circuitous and perhaps not rapid, is as a rule continuous. He makes himself as agreeable as nature and education allow. He fetches and carries, and runs messages and does odd jobs; gets old ladies their cloaks and calls

their carriages; takes neglected mammas to supper; and dances with the plainest girls in the room. To be sure he meets with rebuffs. The popular girls pronounce him 'a little horror,' and won't dance with him on any terms. The young men regard him as an outsider; and the old gentlemen make him the butt of their peculiarly unpleasing humour. Lord Cramlington meets Tom Garbage in Piccadilly, and accosts him with a friendly and hospitable air: 'Are you going to dine anywhere to-night, Garbage?' Tom, scenting an invitation, promptly says 'No.' 'By Gad, what an appetite you'll have to-morrow!' replies Lord Cramlington, and walks away with a cheerful smile. Or Tom is dining with Colonel Guttleby, and the Colonel, gloating over some culinary mess in which his greedy old soul delights, says: 'Do you like this, Garbage?' Tom meekly replies that he thinks it very good. 'Confound it all,' screams Guttleby, 'I know it's good. It wouldn't be on my table if it wasn't good. I asked if you liked it, which is quite a different thing.' Or, again, poor Tom is the guest of Sir Thomas Portmore, famous for his cellar, and inadvertently puts his hand round his claret-glass. 'I see that claret isn't warm enough for you,' says the host; and then, ringing the bell with great violence, roars to the butler, 'Take that wine away and boil it, and put plenty of sugar and spice in it; and then

perhaps it will suit your palate, Mr. Garbage.' Or, once again, Tom is staying with old Mr. Skinflint, who gives him after dinner a bottle which is palpably corked. Even Tom can't stomach the potion, and Mr. Skinflint notices that the bottle doesn't ebb. 'Is there anything the matter with that wine?' 'Well, Mr. Skinflint, as you ask me, I think it has rather an odd taste.' Mr. Skinflint: 'Thank you for telling me. Ring the bell. (To the butler) coffee!' And poor Tom Garbage goes claretless to bed.

But in spite of all these discouragements Tom perseveres. He turns a manly breast to adverse fate, and remembers that better men fared so before him. One must suffer to be beautiful; and if one would be a 'Society Journalist' one must be careful to lay aside that 'tonic of a wholesome pride' which Clough unwisely commended. Tom makes up his mind to be insulted by the old men, and ignored by the young ones and snubbed by the girls. The old men, at any rate, tell him Who's Who and What's What, and instruct him in bygone scandals, and initiate him into mysteries of eating and drinking, which make excellent material for 'Classy Cuttings.' As he is not a sportsman or an athlete, he seldom runs across the young men, and at balls he is quite content to see them whirling off with all the beauties and the heiresses. His business is not with young men and maidens, but with mammas.

'Oh! He doesn't count. He's mamma's partner,' was a girl's terse judgment on a young man who assiduously sate on the chaperones' bench whispering the day's gossip into her mother's ear. And this courtesy is not unrequited, for mamma, grateful for his attentions, says: 'Do come and see us. We are always at home for luncheon. Two o'clock any day. Do come.' And Tom thanks his stars and makes a mental note of it. A well-known man of letters whom we will call Mullins gained the nickname of 'Luncheon Mullins,' from the fact that he always ate that meal at his friends' expense, and contrived to make it an excellent substitute for dinner. As with Mullins so with Garbage. Luncheon suits him to a nicety. Papa doesn't know Garbage from Adam, but, if he happens to be at home, he is civil enough to his wife's guest. The sons, who might be less agreeable, are always out. The girls, if their own friends do not turn up, will condescend to talk to poor Tom, whom in the evening they contemn; and Tom has it all his own way with Mamma. He retails scandal, he asks riddles, he suggests 'lights' for acrostics, he helps to arrange the new screen in the drawing-room. He prescribes for the dachshund afflicted with mange, and gives the address of a capital shop for book-plates or old Sheffield. And then the circular system of rewards begins again; and, in return for his useful arts, his hostess gets her friends

to put him on the list for their balls, and gives him a lift to a garden-party, and asks him at short notice to fill a place in an opera-box; and crowns her benevolences by saying, 'If you are going North this year, do come and see us at Gatherum. We shall be at home all the autumn, and delighted to see you, if you don't mind finding us alone.' Tom accepts enthusiastically, knowing well that one country house leads to another. *Sic itur ad astra.* He passes on into the inner circle of the social mysteries, and gradually acquires by industry, meekness, and address that invaluable experience which Freddy Du Cane has by right of birth. The experience, however acquired, has of course the same market value, and Tom's contributions to Social Journalism resemble Freddy's, but resemble them with a difference. Treading, as the moralist said, 'the narrow path which lies between right and wrong,' Tom does not judge quite so accurately as Freddy about what may be said and what may not. He is generally vulgar and often impertinent; and sometimes, when stung too acutely by the 'toploftiness' of the Berties and the Reggies, and the airs and graces of Lady Corisande and Lady Bertha, he has been known to be spiteful. Then, again, he is not wise enough to keep off the perilous subject of women's dress, and he flounders painfully in the deep waters of brocade and foulard, 'bugles' and

'sequins.' Some twenty years ago, when everyone was reading the American novel 'Democracy,' opinion was sharply divided as to whether the author was a man or a woman. The crucial passage was the description of the Parisian ball-gown, which, on account of its opalescent tints, was called by its creator, Worth, 'The Dawn in June.' All men said that this passage proved that the book was by a woman; all women, that it was by a man, for 'Only a man could write such stuff about a woman's dress.' Similar imprudences often bring Tom Garbage into just contempt.

Then, again, Tom having, as compared with Freddy, a limited stock-in-trade, is constrained to use the same material with undesirable iteration. Everyone who is a student of 'Classy Cuttings' must be conversant with the following paragraph, which has appeared in the columns of that journal every July for the last twenty years: 'The Duke and Duchess of Bumbledom have left Bumbledom Abbey for Fernley, the family seat in Loamshire. Fernley is a *cottage ornée*, beautifully situated on the banks of the Slowwater. It was built by John, sixth Duke of Bumbledom, at the cost of £100,000, and there are forty miles of grass drives in the grounds.' Tom Garbage must have had many a merry trip to Margate on the profits of that single 'par.'

XXIX

THE WRITING WOMAN

In describing Freddy Du Cane and his contributions to Social Journalism, I said that he had a formidable competitor in the Writing Woman and that she deserved a chapter all to herself. And yet now that I approach this high theme my knees knock together, for I feel that I am tempting fate. Rash intruder into sacred precincts, I may be torn to pieces in the columns of 'Classy Cuttings,' brained with a fan, stabbed with a bodkin, assegaied with a knitting-needle. But when one is the victim of panic it always is a comfort to feel that one is cowardly in good company, and I know that my present qualms were shared by so bold a hero as Lord Beaconsfield. I spoke just now about 'the Mysteries of Bona Dea.' Let me quote the droll passage from which I took the words. Lord Beaconsfield is describing the midnight scene in Lady St. Aldegonde's dressing-room, and he says: 'There the silent observation of the evening found avenging expression in sparkling criticism, and the summer

lightning, though it generally blazed with harmless brilliancy, occasionally assumed a more arrowy character. The gentlemen of the smoking-room have it not all their own way quite as much as they think. If, indeed, a new School of Athens were to be pictured, the sages and the students might be represented in exquisite dressing-gowns, with slippers rarer than the lost one of Cinderella, and brandishing beautiful brushes over tresses still more fair. Then is the time when characters are never more finely drawn or difficult social questions more accurately solved; knowledge without reasoning and truth without logic—the triumph of intuition! *But we must not profane the mysteries of Bona Dea.*'

It might perhaps be doubted whether ladies moving in that social empyrean which Lord Beaconsfield loved to describe would translate their intuitions into print, or traffic in the 'slippery stuff' of Social Journalism. But to express this doubt would argue strange forgetfulness of a famous action for libel. It is a notorious act that a well-known editor rules his rate of payment strictly by the social standing of his contributors, and that a titled paragraphist can make twice and thrice the profit which an undistinguished competitor could make out of exactly the same material. But the Writing Woman is what gardeners call a 'hardy climber,' and, though occasionally she blossoms on the

very summit of the social edifice, she has her roots at its base and spreads her branches over all the intermediate space. It is as certain as internal and external evidence can make it that an admirable article on Queen Victoria, which set the whole world talking, was inspired by a lady long and intimately connected with the Court. But it is probable that, knowing the perils of such authorship, she did not put pen to paper. Most likely she communicated the substance of her recollections to Freddy Du Cane or Tom Garbage, and he supplied the verbal apparatus. A humbler practitioner of the same art was calling on a lady who had just returned from a round of visits to country houses, and asked quite frankly if she might enumerate them in 'Classy Cuttings.' When this was conceded, she added, with sweet persuasiveness: 'If only I might mention all the people whom you met there I should get a great deal more for the paragraph.' Not long ago a man who takes a great deal of pains with his dress was spending the day with some friends at a suburban villa. After luncheon lawn-tennis was proposed, and, having no tennis-clothes with him, he merely took off his coat and waistcoat and untied his scarf, which was a choice and wonderful work of art. As he was retying it with anxious and lover-like solicitude, a lady whom he had never met before said: 'I noticed at luncheon how beautifully your scarf was

tied. I do admire men who can use their fingers.' Greatly flattered by this praise, he carefully explained his elaborate system of folding and crossing and puffing. Next Saturday, on entering his club, he was gratified by a welcoming chorus of chaff. 'Oh, here comes the modern Brummel!' 'How's it done, old man?' 'What did she give you for the tip?' 'Take my dick, I always thought it was a reach-me-down!'—and similar ribaldries. A dozen friendly hands proffered him the new number of 'Classy Cuttings,' which contained some such paragraph as this: 'The Hon. Archibald Dandison (called "Dandy" by his friends) is understood to give the whole powers of his mind to the arrangement of his scarves. It is an open question whether he or his groom ties a white scarf best, but in black silk Mr. Dandison is unrivalled. The plan on which he works is a family secret dating from the days of the Regency. His collection of scarfpins is unique. It is a tradition among the Dandisons that they never wear bows, whereas the Fitz-Neptunes, who have always been a nautical family, wear nothing but sailor-knots. These are the *nuances* of aristocratic costume.'

It is in personalities that the Writing Woman excels. Freddy Du Cane and Tom Garbage can beat her all to pieces in that smattering of history, archæology, and art-criticism which is required for the proper descrip-

tion of Castles and Courts and Abbeys, with their environments and contents; but mere personalities, whether of appearance or dress or manner, are the stock-in-trade of the Writing Woman. 'Lady Clara Vere de Vere looked lovely in the palest green, with an enormous black crinoline hat. She has the most wonderfully delicate complexion, like the inside of a shell or a Malmaison carnation.' Or: 'Lady Grampus is quite one of the smartest of the young married women, and looked very effective in a tailor-made costume of heather mixture and a brown billycock. She is not exactly pretty, but there is something wonderfully *espiègle* in her manner.' Or yet again: 'At Lord's I saw the younger Miss Blossom walking with Lord Noahsark, to whom she is engaged. Everyone says it is quite a love-match, and she looked *so* happy. Of course there is a good deal of difference between their ages, but he is *très bel homme* and his frock coat fitted him wonderfully.'

It is obvious that a woman who goes even moderately into any kind of society, uses her eyes, and can hold a pen may evolve 'copy' of this description to any required amount. All she hears and sees she jots down, nor does she scorn extraneous aids. Herself a contributor to 'Classy Cuttings,' she takes all the other Social Journals, and not a little of her art consists in reproducing the substance of a paragraph

which has appeared in some rival print. Of these journals there are many, and one of the most popular bears a reputation so hazardous that ladies when buying it at a station always tear off the cover before they begin to read it. But it is 'a nest of spicery,' and its contents (like the sewage-plant) find their way into unlikely quarters. To her pile of journals the Writing Woman adds Burke's 'Peerage,' which is invaluable for pedigrees and relationships, and 'Debrett,' who ungallantly tells the ladies' ages. If she is wise, she buys 'Great Landowners,' a scarce and most helpful volume, which enables the veriest outsider to discourse quite familiarly about great people's acreages and incomes, ground-rents and mineral rights. Thus armed, the Writing Woman flings herself into the social fray, and emerges at the end of the season, if not with all the honours, at least with some of the profits, of the great campaign.

But, while we are discussing these feminine contributions to Social Journalism, we must not omit the Uninvited Woman. Her line of action is, in some respects, easier and straighter than that of her invited sister. She is not, and does not profess to be, 'in Society.' She is not invited to people's houses, and therefore she violates no laws of hospitality, no sanctities of domestic life. Like John Wesley, she exclaims, 'The whole world is my parish;' and wherever the female

foot can penetrate unbidden she is to be found. A fashionable wedding is her supreme occasion. Man's extremity is her opportunity. My friend Freddy Du Cane to-day unites his lot to that of the girl with a little money, and we rally round the sacrifice at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, or St. Margaret's, Westminster. Half an hour before the service begins the Uninvited Woman appears, generally, as the Furies always hunt in couples, accompanied by a sister in the craft. She plants a manly foot upon the hassock, or, if need be, on the seat, and, rearing herself aloft, glares round the church with *pince-nez* and note-book. 'Which is the bridegroom? The one with the red nose and the moustache? No, that's the best man. The bridegroom is the pale one. What a wretched-looking little object! Which are his relations? That's the bridegroom's mother in blue velvet. Are you sure? I think it's the bride's grandmother. What plain girls the bridesmaids are! Not one pretty one among them! Oh, is that the Duchess of Doublegloucester's daughter? Well, I think *she* is rather pretty, and certainly they are beautifully dressed. What did the bridegroom give them?' Turquoise lockets; but they'll have to be paid for with his wife's money, for I hear he hasn't got a farthing. Did you see the presents? I couldn't get there. Do tell me all about them. Was there any jewellery? Yes; her father gave her three diamond butterflies which

fasten together and make a tiara. And Lady Du Cane gave a red necklace. I couldn't make out the stones. Perhaps they were only carbuncles, but we had better say rubies. I saw all the *trousseau*. The *lingerie* was too lovely, and there was a sable cloak which must have cost a fortune.'

The Uninvited Woman, who does not expect to be remunerated on the same scale as a calumnious Countess, has a whole column to herself in each week's 'Classy Cuttings.' She writes over some such winning nickname as 'Minna' or 'Tricksy,' and pours herself out on dress and jewellery, decoration and furniture. Following the high examples of Whyte-Melville, who puffed Gunter in 'Good for Nothing,' and Lord Beaconsfield, who puffed Edgington in 'Endymion,' Minna flies from dressmaker to milliner and from jeweller to shoemaker, enthusing over Lady A.'s train and Miss B.'s wedding veil, the marvellous *rivière* which Lord C. has given to his bride, and the diamond-sewn shoes in which Princess D. danced at the Court ball. Puffery is honourable in all, and the 'par' not unrequited; but it will not fill a column. Perhaps it is on cooking that Tricksy is really at her best. If the splendours of the 'Haute Cuisine' are demanded, a page from Ude or Francatelli can easily be transferred to 'Classy Cuttings;' but more homely fare can be so manipulated as to make good 'copy.' Hear her on our

old friends, 'sausages and mashed:' 'I think you will like this confection—six *Petits Saucissons*, lightly fried, and embedded in a succulent mass of *Purée de Pommes-de-terre*. You can't think how refreshing this is in the dog-days.' 'We came home very late from "The Man from Blankley's," and dear old Sarah had prepared such a dainty little repast. Do you know a delicacy called tripe? The French *chefs* fry it with onions and call it "Tripes à la Soubise." It is ravishing.' All the Writing Woman's domestic economy is forced into the same service. 'We are furnishing our flat so prettily. It is wonderful what you can do with empty boxes turned upside down and covered with Art fabrics from Liberty's. We have no carpets, which we think fusty, but have painted the floor with Aspinall's Enamel Paint. It is pale green, and we put some Oriental rugs over it. Everyone says the contrast is lovely.' 'We gave a little housewarming tea-party last Saturday. Everything came from Harrod's Stores and was beautifully done. The ices were too heavenly; but we would not have cold beef, as we were not entertaining Royalty.'

XXX

THE RACING WOMAN

LET us distinguish, said the philosopher; and I wish to draw a very clear line between the woman who merely goes to races for amusement and the woman to whom racing is the serious occupation of life. In the former category some of the most virtuous people in the world may nowadays be included. The old Puritan tradition which bound racing, card-playing, and theatre-going in one bundle of fuel for the everlasting bonfire has pretty nearly perished. The President of the English Church Union always has one of the gayest parties in Yorkshire for the Doncaster Races, and the Nonconformist Conscience saluted the owner of Ladas as its chosen statesman. So with the ladies of Society. The gravest matrons allow their husbands to go unrebuked to the Derby or to Newmarket. The most scrupulously-careful mothers take their daughters to Ascot and Goodwood; and they may do so with a perfectly clear conscience, for to the ordinary woman those meetings are merely garden-

parties. A few years ago a ridiculous clique of fashionable folks formed a Mutual Admiration Society of a new and original type. They were very familiar with one another, and tried to be very exclusive in their demeanour towards the rest of the world. Their line was to be very good-looking and very well-dressed and very smart in all their belongings and appurtenances, and exceedingly intellectual at the same time. It was obviously a difficult combination. Some very stupid men and some very plain women gained, by occult methods, admission to the circle. This proved fatal to the movement, and its epitaph was written in 'Dodo.' But, while these drolls flourished, they went racing in a very characteristic fashion. They used to sit in the Enclosure at Ascot with their backs to the course. And everyone said—or was meant to say—'How very superior those people must be! They only come to Ascot for fresh air and change of scene, to elevate the standard of taste in dress, and to exalt culture in the stronghold of the Philistines.'

Well, what the Drolls did with appropriate absurdity and self-consciousness, is done quite naturally and honestly by multitudes of nice women and girls. They go to races frankly to enjoy themselves. They escape for a day or a week from the fustiness of London, they display their prettiest frocks, and see,

without mortification, others quite as pretty. They meet their friends amid all those surroundings of open-air frolic which are so notoriously conducive to a good understanding between boys and girls. If they happen to care about horses, they see at close quarters the best that England has to show. And they exchange sportive little bets with the Freddy Du Canes, who, in spite of the small balance, thoroughly enjoy losing to them. Freddy wins a pair of driving gloves and loses a parasol; and the girl with the little money backs 'Morny's' mount because she admires his seat, or puts her half-crown on Strong Tea because it is such a capital name. But these are the mocking echoes of long-departed youth.

Even if we eliminate the subsidiary joys of betting gloves and picnicking on coaches, of comparing frocks in the Enclosure and galloping about Windsor Forest on the off-days, a woman who has been brought up to the sport can get a great deal of honest amusement out of genuine racing. I once found myself sitting by the sister of one of the Lost Leaders of the Turf—a man whose achievements and disasters had been the wonder of his time—and in reply to some modest proposal of mine she said, 'No; I never bet. You wouldn't bet if you had lived six months cheek by jowl with a bailiff put into your home on account of racing debts. But I know a good horse when I see him, and I love a good

race, and Tattenham Corner simply makes my heart stand still.' There spoke the woman who loved the game for the game's sake, and was never a penny the richer or the poorer for the game's result. Quite a different type is the woman who makes racing her profession. If I adopt the name of Catherine, Countess of Ascot, I do so partly because it presents no audible resemblance to the real name of the lady whom I have in mind, and partly because the Lady Ascot of 'Ravenshoe' is a perfect portrait of the racing gentlewoman. The Lady Ascot of real life had gambling in her blood. A shrewd eye to the main chance; an intense love of excitement and adventure; were elements as strongly marked in her nature as warmth of heart and loyalty to her friends. The supreme interest and permanent pursuit of her life was racing. She went about it in the most business-like manner—lived on intimate terms with owners of horses, exchanged friendly confidences with trainers, took a motherly interest in jockeys, collected her information with care, applied it with skill, bore losses with patience, and enjoyed triumphs without undue exaltation. She lived in racing, for racing, and by racing. Her winnings formed the bulk of her income, and at the beginning of each season it was easy to judge by the greater or less smartness of her carriage and horses whether the previous twelve months' racing had been successful or disastrous.

Another great lady of the turf was the Duchess of Doublegloucester. Those who were present at a famous racing-trial some fifteen years ago will vividly remember Her Grace's deportment in the witness-box. The jockeys and trainers had shuffled and wriggled, and the smart young gentlemen who patronize the Turf had missed the point of every question, and stared about them like calves in a pen. To them succeeded the Duchess; and great was the contrast. She more than justified Lord Herschell's dictum that women are the best witnesses; answered every question promptly and precisely, spoke in the clearest tone, stood her ground with the most perfect dignity; and, when she had occasion to use any of the technical jargon of the Turf, she invariably translated it in a bewitching aside addressed to the very unsportsman-like gentlemen in the jury-box.

An enterprising widow, whose husband had left her a stud and a million, determined to express her gratitude by some appropriate memorial. Moved by the spiritual destitution of the jockeys at a racing centre which she specially affected, she built them a handsome church. In order to perpetuate her position as the Pious Foundress, she caused a counterfeit presentment of herself, in the character of a saint whose name she bore, to be inserted in the reredos. The incumbent, with little gratitude and less gallantry,

demurred to this erection; whereupon the widow, deftly turning the reproach away from herself, went about saying, 'Parsons are such unreasonable people. Mine won't have poor St. Bridgitina in his reredos. It is so uncalled for. I'm told she was a most respectable person—not a word against her character.' But this was not the only mortification to which the pious and sporting Foundress was exposed. Someone who noticed that she no longer attended her own church, asked her the reason. She replied, with emotion: 'How can I? I'm not in charity with Tom Snaffle. He shared my hymn-book on Sunday, and pulled my horse on Monday.'

These are some of the more creditable instances of the Racing Woman. I have known less agreeable specimens—women whom the demon of gambling has made its own, and whom no domestic obligations can soften or restrain. Tradition says that one such was entertaining a party for Doncaster Races. Her husband died suddenly. She retired to her own rooms, but would not allow the party to break up, saying that the fact that there was a corpse in the house need make no difference to anyone's enjoyment. Quite recently a racing wife dragged a moribund husband from one meeting to another, cloaking her own inveterate love of excitement under the rather threadbare plea that a little change of scene did the poor dear

good; and, as he was already in the article of death, the final 'change of scene' was not long deferred. Then there are the women on whom, wherever they go, telegrams containing 'tips' fall like autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa—women who intrigue with apprentices and 'stand-in' with stable-boys; quarrel with their husbands, and neglect their children, and bully their servants; and disregard every domestic and almost every social obligation in their mad thirst for ill-gotten gain. The type is scarcely agreeable, but it must be catalogued among the social phenomena of our time.

How far the Racing Woman extends in the middle and lower classes I feel myself scarcely competent to judge; but one instance recurs to my memory which perhaps represents more than itself. Readers of 'Lothair' will remember that Lord Beaconsfield created a mysterious being called MARY ANNE, whose name he spelt in capitals and whom he treated as symbolizing, and to some extent controlling, the Secret Societies of Europe. She probably had no tangible existence; but until quite lately there existed in London a Mary Anne who was nearly as mysterious as her revolutionary namesake, and was a real person into the bargain. My Mary Anne was a sporting housemaid. She lived in the service of a great family who spent nine months of the year at their country places,

During these nine months Mary Anne took care of the London house, and she beguiled her leisure by gambling on the Turf. How she acquired the information and the judgment which constituted her stock-in-trade was never positively known. Perhaps she had racing blood in her veins. Perhaps she had begun life in the service of a racing family. Perhaps she had friends or kinsfolk among jockeys and trainers. All that is conjecture. What is certain is that, in the circle which she adorned, her 'tip' was regarded as extremely well worth having; that she followed the events of the racing year with the closest interest; that she was in constant communication with racing centres; that she lent money to young servants who wanted to bet or had done so unsuccessfully; and that she accumulated a sum which, for a woman in her class of life, was affluence. Betting is, as everyone knows, the besetting sin of smart servants in London, and perhaps elsewhere. And to speculative footmen and plunging valets Mary Anne was an oracle. She combined the incongruous functions of a tipster and a banker, and enjoyed the good-will and respect of all who dealt with her in either capacity. Wherever the Racing Women of the nineteenth century are commemorated, this humble but successful sister in the craft should not be forgotten.

XXXI

FINANCE

We have seen some of the various methods by which people in smart Society make money or contrive to live without it. We may now dismiss such minor forms of money-making as cards, racing, and Social Journalism. There is much to be said for letting your house in London while you stay with your friends in the country; and taking a 'honorarium' for introducing some opulent outsider into the social empyrean. There remain those more serious forms of financial enterprise which have the Stock Exchange for their centre, and which exercise an ever-increasing influence alike over social and political life. Though that influence constantly increases, it is no new phenomenon. By far the acutest observer of our national life in the nineteenth century was Lord Beaconsfield, who combined the shrewdness of his race with unique opportunities of observation, and his account of the 'Railway Mania' of 1840–1845 throws an illustrative light on some transactions of the present day:

'When the passions of the English, naturally an enthusiastic people, are excited on a matter of finance, their will, their determination, and resource are irresistible. This was signally proved in the present instance, for they never ceased subscribing their capital until the sum entrusted to this new form of investment reached an amount almost equal to the National Debt. It cannot be pretended that all this energy and enterprise were free in their operation from those evils which, it seems, must inevitably attend any extensive public speculation, however well founded. Many of the scenes and circumstances recalled the days of the South Sea Scheme. The gambling in shares of companies which were formed only in name was without limit. . . . And the gambling was universal, from the noble to the mechanic. It was confined to no class and no sex.'

Everyone who has read 'Tancred' will recall the delightfully ironic scene where the young idealist, just starting on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, takes leave of the only woman in London who has ever sympathized with his spiritual aspirations. At the crisis of their farewells, when Love and Faith are struggling for the mastery, the heroine receives a note, reads it, and falls senseless on the floor. The note runs: 'Three o'clock. The Narrow Gauge has won. We are utterly done; and Snicks tells me you bought five

hundred more yesterday at ten. Is it possible?' Tancred is disillusioned, and, ungallantly leaving the lady on the hearthrug, carries his lacerated heart to Jerusalem.

While Lord Beaconsfield was thus observing the Railway Mania at the summit of Society, Thackeray was busy at the base:

'Two gents of dismal mien, And dark and greasy rags,
Came out of a shop for gin, Swaggering over the flags:
Was I sober or awake? Could I believe my ears?
Those dismal beggars spake Of nothing but railway shares.
I wondered more and more: Says one: 'Good friend of mine,
How many shares have you wrote for, In the Diddlesex Junction line?'
'I wrote for twenty,' says Jim; 'But they wouldn't give me one;'
His comrade straight rebuked him For the folly he had done:
'O Jim, you are unawares Of the ways of this bad town;
I always write for five hundred shares, And *then* they put me down.'
'And yet you got no shares,' Says Jim, 'for all your boast;'
'I *would* have wrote,' says Jack, 'but where Was the penny to pay the post?'
'I lost, for I couldn't pay That first instalment up;
But here's taters smoking hot—I say, Let's stop, my boy, and sup.'
This talk did me perplex, All night I tumbled and tost,
And thought of railroad specs, And how money was won and lost.
'Bless railroads everywhere,' I said, 'and the world's advance,
Bless every railroad share In Italy, Ireland, France;
For never a beggar need now despair, And every rogue has a chance.'

The rogues, high and low, had their chance and made the most of it, and the effect of their transactions

was soon visible, alike in Politics and in Society. The 'Railway King,' by whose genius the new channel for English capital had been discovered, became for a brief space the most powerful personage in the country. Eminent men and beautiful women grovelled to him for shares in his undertakings. He obtained the complete confidence of a prudent and even suspicious Prime Minister. His projects engrossed the attention of the House of Commons. The enterprise which he had so consummately organized reacted on the revenue. A general sense of comfort and prosperity pervaded the working classes. The agitation against the Corn Laws died down for want of workable material, and, though the League had transplanted itself from Manchester to London and hired theatres for its rhetoric, the close of 1845 found it nearly reduced to silence.

The inevitable reaction was indeed near at hand. The Railway King was dethroned with dramatic suddenness, and ended his days, twenty-five years later, in a lodging-house in Pimlico. I have only dwelt upon the movement which he led because of its striking resemblance to transactions of our own time. The connexion between Finance and Government has, of course, been close and immemorial. The social and political influence, at home and abroad, of the remarkable family which Lord Beaconsfield called 'Neuchatel' is an illustration of it, and similar instances on a similar

scale might be adduced by the dozen. Finance went near to involving us in war on behalf of Turkey in 1878. Finance actually involved us in all the miseries and disgraces of our Egyptian policy in 1882. At such times of national crisis the bondholder exercises an influence on Government all the more pernicious because it is unseen and untraceable. In that influence is to be found the cause of the gravest crimes and most startling blunders which Ministries, both Liberal and Conservative, commit. A new and most perilous era in the history of our finance was opened when a trading company obtained a Charter enabling it to rule a large portion of South Africa. The silence of the Liberal Opposition at the time when the Charter was granted is one of the least creditable incidents in our political history. What an opportunity for Mr. Gladstone's constitutional lore! What a suitable theme for Mr. Morley's ethical eloquence against the 'obscene empires of Mammon and Belial!' But those were the days of the 'Union of Hearts.' Mr. Rhodes, by a master-stroke of policy, had secured the silence of the Irish party, and what the Irish acquiesced in the English Radicals would not denounce. The political cowardice, or at best shortsightedness, of that time was the direct cause of some of the worst evils which we now endure. What the professional financiers did I have no means of knowing,

but the frantic speculations of Society were well within my own personal observation. Hoary old card-sharpers like my friends 'the Staymakers' scraped together their ill-gotten gains and plunged them into South African securities. Freddy Du Cane, if by luck he had a hundred pounds to spare, thought he saw a chance of turning it into a thousand. Tom Garbage followed suit with an unexpected fiver. Tremulous old maids sold out their little holdings in Railways or Consols and poured them into the sands of South Africa. The widow, the curate, and the orphan made haste to be rich; and all London quivered with the South African fever. Those were the golden days of booms and dividends. There has been many a 'slump' since, and the weakest have naturally gone to the wall. But the more resolute speculators have held their ground, and the resolve to be rich has modified itself into a grim determination to keep what one has got.

The speculator, male or female, who knows that a greater or lesser dividend means the difference between a carriage and a cab, between gowns made by Mr. Worth and gowns made by Madame Fribsby, between a moor in Scotland and a trip to Brighton, between a winter at Monte Carlo and a winter in South Belgravia, is not very scrupulous as to the methods by which the higher figure is to be secured.

A lady who habitually gambled away a quarter of her husband's income, and knew that at least another quarter of it depended on South Africa, was not unlikely to welcome the war as the best chance of averting disastrous diminution. 'Buy 'em, my vrend,' cried the 'Throckmorton Street Patriot' in the 'Westminster Gazette,' 'Buy 'em till you're black in the face. Vy, it'll be all over in a veek ven ve get out there.' If the madness of France in the summer of 1870 was partly due to the malign influence of a beautiful lady, it is not less true that the madness of England in the summer of 1899 was partly due to some ladies who, if not beautiful, at least were powerful.

Why should people highly placed and far beyond the reach of poverty be thus desperately anxious for wealth, and thus callously unscrupulous as to the way of acquiring it? The answer is probably to be found in that enormous growth of luxury which I have already described, and that ever-increasing extravagance of which I shall have some more to say. But, whatever be the explanation, the fact remains, and no useful purpose is served by pretending to ignore it. If the Brothers Neuchatel would only publish memoirs of their private dealings with eminent persons of both sexes, they could disclose some curious instances of the financial methods of smart Society. A pretty woman, presuming on a merely social acquaintance, implores

a financial friend to 'put her on something good'—which, as she has not the remotest intention of risking a penny on the transaction, is only a polite request for a present of money. Husbands firmly close their eyes to domestic passages of which they cannot be supposed to approve, in consideration of the fact that milliners' bills are paid by their old friend Von Capel, or that young Throckmorton provides the box at the Opera, or that little Lombard supplies the diamonds which are displayed there.

XXXII

FILTHY LUCRE

In surveying the social phenomena of the present day I have more than once commented on that passion for money-making which is certainly one of the most sinister signs of the times. Of course, if it were merely a mania for hoarding, it would be nothing new. The Miser is as familiar a character as the Spendthrift. He pervades all literature, ancient and modern, and has played a considerable part in history. Thrice happy is that family which can number among its immediate progenitors a man who loved money for its own sake, and scorned to barter it for more perishable commodities. That was a delightful touch of Mr. Anstey Guthrie's in 'Vice Versâ,' where Dick asked for a tip on returning to school and Mr. Bultitude said, 'If I did give you one you'd only go and spend it'—'*as if he considered money an object of art.*' The people who 'consider money an object of art'—a thing to be pursued and collected and treasured and safeguarded—are not the delight of their contem-

poraries, but are justly revered by a grateful posterity. Such a one was Lord A——, credibly reputed to be the richest man in the peerage. He was putting one of his sons into the Navy, and was much exercised by the problem whether he should give the boy a silver watch. In a lucky moment he found that an impecunious friend, Lord B——, had a son just going to join the same ship. 'My dear B——, are you going to give your boy a watch?' 'Well, I was thinking of it.' 'Oh, then, that's all right. My boy can look at your boy's watch.' Such another was the noble millionaire who lived in two rooms in a street off the Strand and had a framed bank-note hung over his bed like an object of worship. Such was the last Duke of X——, who having £200,000 a year, always wore woollen gloves of a peculiar sort and bought them over the counter, lest the haberdasher, knowing his name, should put up the price. 'It wouldn't do for him to know who I am—charge me more, you know; charge me more.' Such was Mr. Y——, partner in one of the greatest banking-houses in Lombard Street, whom, though habitually transfixed with rheumatic gout, I have seen waiting for a 'bus at a street-corner in a north-east wind with snow in it, rather than spend eighteenpence on a hansom. Such, again, was the amiable Lord Z——, who used to impress upon his younger friends this philosophy of life: 'There are

only two really pleasant things in the world. Eating and drinking I reckon together as one, and hoarding money is the other. You require youth to enjoy the first, but the second becomes pleasanter every day you live.'

But the money-making which in these chapters I have had in view is of a quite different type. It is inspired, not by the love of hoarding, but by the love of spending; or rather, perhaps, I should say, by the necessity of spending. That necessity is created by recent alterations in the habits and practice of Society, and it is endured by people who would rather sacrifice their souls than lose their social standing, but who certainly have no natural love of parting with their money. Not long ago a friend of mine was sitting in the second row of seats in a fashionable church. In the row in front of him were three leaders of the fashionable world—two men and a woman. The tell-tale 'plate' (since superseded by the secretive alms-bag) began its round in the front row. When it was handed to my friend in the second row it contained a half-crown, a shilling, and a sixpenny-bit. And this contribution to the needs of 'our poorer brethren' was made by a trio who together did not spend less than £60,000 a year upon themselves.

'Money is character,' said Bulwer-Lytton in one of his characteristic apophthegms, and that aspect of

the commodity was beautifully illustrated by the late Lord C——. He was a book-buyer on the largest scale, and everyone praised his noble love of literature, contrasting so favourably with the vulgar extravagances of the racecourse and the gaming-table. He always made his purchases through a London bookseller, whom we will call Mr. D——, and one day D—— presented himself at the country seat of his noble patron, when the following dialogue ensued:

Mr. D.: 'There is a great sale of books in Paris next week, my Lord, and I feel that I ought to be there.'

Lord C.: 'Quite right, D. If you come across anything really good, let me know.'

Mr. D.: 'I will, my Lord; and I hope your Lordship will excuse my mentioning the fact that your account with me now runs into three figures. It would be extremely convenient to me if your Lordship could settle it before I go to the sale.'

Lord C.: 'And do you mean that you have the audacity to tell me to my face that you propose to go to Paris and speculate with MY money?' (ringing the bell): 'John, show this person out of the house.'

Thus spoke at once a noble taste for culture and a generous indignation against the misuse of money.

But I am bound to say that it is not on book-collecting that the smart people of the present day spend the products of their financial ingenuity. Racing

and gambling, 'plunging' and 'punting' are occasions of loss as well as of profit, according to the less or greater intelligence of the persons who practise them. And this kind of expenditure is immemorial. The special feature of the present day is the extravagance of ordinary living. The contrast in this respect between the present and the past is startling, and, even if it stood alone, would account for the ever-increasing hunger for money. Everyone has heard of the Duke of Wellington's iron bedstead at Walmer and eighteen-penny dinners at the United Service Club. Lord Stanmore tells us that when Queen Victoria visited his father, Lord Aberdeen, at Haddo, 'the window-curtains, bed-curtains, and other furniture of Her Majesty's room consisted of white dimity lined with blue calico.' Tea and coffee, rolls and eggs, furnished the breakfast-table of the most famous house in England. Luncheon, only half condoned as a luxurious innovation, consisted of a slice from the servants' joint or the cold relics of yesterday's pheasant. Bread and cheese and beer was a normal shooting-luncheon. People who wanted a cup of tea at five o'clock procured it by stealth from the housekeeper's room. Champagne was a beverage reserved for high solemnities, and then was dribbled out with as much care as if it had been distilled from gold. In contrast to this aristocratic simplicity we need only set such a

scale of diet and such a system of living as I have described in my account of a country house. 'Three dinners a day, a couple of snacks, and drinks whenever you want 'em,' is Freddy Du Cane's epitome of modern hospitality. And, as with eating and drinking, so with all personal appointments. Ceremony and splendour for great occasions, simplicity in ordinary life, were the characteristics of English aristocracy. Nowadays we hear of an 'infant,' in the legal sense, who reckoned a gold latchkey among his necessary expenses. A gentleman aged twenty-six loses forty thousand pounds' worth of jewels, and is careful to inform the press that they were not ladies' ornaments, but part of his personal decoration. 'Pushing the bed on one side, jewels were found lying on the floor which are estimated to be worth fully £12,000.' One young gentleman—I admit, brought up in Paris—wears a miniature watch set in diamonds outside his coat. Another has a dressing-case of which all the fittings are gold, with jewelled coronets; a third has all his boot-trees made of ivory and stamped with his crest and monogram. In a society where these amenities prevail among the men, it would be perverse to expect simplicity in women's dress. Fifty years ago the daughters of the greatest houses, going to the grandest balls, were restricted by iron laws to simple frocks of white muslin. Anything

more elaborate would have been regarded as sheer vulgarity. To-day the girls dress almost as smartly as the married women. Then a gentlewoman 'regarded frippery as the ambition of a huckster's daughter, and thought the solicitudes of feminine fashion an occupation for Bedlam.' To-day we are instructed by competent authority on 'the impossibility of dressing on £1,000 a year.' At Oxford I once heard an enthusiastic connoisseur of academical costume exclaim, 'A Proctor without bands is stark naked;' and the same constructive nudity is apparently the lot of those who cannot, or will not, pay £60 for a velvet gown or £500 for a chinchilla cape.

When Dr. Wilkinson, now Bishop of St. Andrews, was Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, he often used to electrify his congregation by suddenly denouncing the Seven Last Woes on some manifestation of luxury which had appeared in his parish or caught his eye in a newspaper. 'I read the other day,' he exclaimed, just after a fashionable wedding, 'of a wretched woman who had her shoes sewn with diamonds.' It was a true bill, if the 'fashionable intelligence' might be trusted; but the allusion was not relished by the bride's parents, who said it was rather hard if a father might not give his daughter a pair of shoes when she married without hearing of it from the pulpit. 'What pretty buttons those are!' said a young lady to a

newly-married friend. 'They ought to be,' was the reply, 'for they cost a pound apiece.' A lady of the great financial house of Goldbug once remarked to a gratified audience that her laundress's bill amounted to £500 a year, and that, for her own part, she did not see how anyone was to keep herself clean on less. As most of her hearers contrived not only to keep themselves clean but to eat, drink, dress, travel, and pay rent on the sum in question, the remark was received with the admiration which it deserved.

As with personal appointments, so with entertainment. So profoundly has Society been debauched and corrupted by luxury that no one nowadays thinks it worth while to entertain unless he can compete with the Helots of Park Lane. Not long ago an eminent brewer gave a ball which was computed to have cost £4,000; and if the figure seems to stagger credibility, let the sceptic fill a hall, a staircase, a gallery, and three large rooms with orchids, camellias, and azaleas in the month of February and give all the Freddy Du Canes of London 'the run of their teeth' amid his truffles and champagne. Once when I had been dining with a party at a famous restaurant the host complimented the head waiter on the prettiness of the floral decorations, and the waiter replied, with true artistic emotion in his voice: 'Ah, sir, if you could only see the

room when the dinner is three guineas a head exclusive of the wine, you would think it was a little heaven on earth.' As we contemplate these hospitable outlays, the passion for money-making seems to assume the semblance of a social virtue.

XXXIII

HEDONISM

A LECTURER at Oxford, discoursing on Hedonism to a rather elementary class, thus sought to establish a ratio between intellectual and physical pleasures: 'Now, supposing I have a pound to spend, shall I extract a greater amount of enjoyment from it by buying twenty pocket-volumes of Shakespeare or twenty bottles of champagne?' 'Try the Shakespeare, sir,' roared the wholesome-minded youths, who thought that even the hackneyed writing of that overrated dramatist might be more enjoyable than champagne at a shilling a bottle.

From this instructive anecdote I seem to draw two morals, and both may help to guide us in dealing with those topics of social extravagance which are my present concern. In the first place, it is impossible to know by intuition what sort of thing will give pleasure to another and seem to him a rewarding object for the outlay of his money. In the second place, these Hedonistic problems can be profitably discussed only when

one brings one's theories into touch with actualities, facts, and figures. On *à priori* grounds, the lecturer expected the undergraduates to rate champagne above Shakespeare, and his surprise at their reply was due to his unfamiliarity with the actual price of a commodity about which he was theorizing. I will take my two morals in inverted order, and I will frankly avow, in connexion with my strictures on the rank extravagance of modern Society, that it is extremely difficult to attain 'actuality' in dealing with other people's money-matters. To begin with, the world is full of vague people, to whom figures and statistics present no definite ideas and who yet are willing enough to chatter about them. Sir James Mackintosh, according to Sydney Smith, was well aware that a guinea represented a quantity of shillings and that it would barter for a quantity of cloth; 'but the accurate number of the baser coin or the just measurement of the manufactured article to which he was entitled for his gold he could never learn and it was impossible to teach him.' Some people, on the other hand, remember figures but make nonsense of what they remember. Thus the eminent editor of a daily paper, having lately recovered from influenza, informed me that his temperature had been 110. On my expressing mild astonishment at this signal hyperpyrexia, he replied, with solemn emphasis, that he had never in his life made a mistake

about a figure. To my suggestion that the figure might be quite accurate but might have applied to his pulse instead of his temperature he answered, 'Oh, that's very likely. But the point is that it was 110.'

Over and above this vagueness about figures, there is in the mind of the average man an inexplicable tendency to exaggerate in money-matters. It would almost seem as if the mere fact of talking about large sums of money imparted some of the pleasure of enjoying them, and that a man felt rich when he talked about riches. Not long ago a banker told me that, when dining-out in London, he constantly heard statements made about the incomes of his customers, and that those incomes were invariably—often enormously—exaggerated. He added that in forty years' experience he could scarcely remember to have heard a man described as poorer than he really was. The only people who possess the magic secret of finding out what a man is worth are the speculative mothers who carry on their operations in the marriage-market. To them it is given to know, by some process unrevealed to the outsider, what every man's acreage is and how far it has been affected by agricultural depression; who has house-property in towns or accumulations in the Funds to back his income from land; how far A.'s property is burdened by jointures and charges; and whether it is true that B.'s

younger brothers have thirty thousand apiece. But, putting aside these expert authorities, the ordinary On-looker roughly divides Society into three classes—those whose wealth is really 'a big thing;' those who 'can get along;' and those who 'haven't got a farthing.' The edges of the three classes merge imperceptibly into one another, like the hues of the prism; but broadly stated the first class means the people with £100,000 a year; the second class those with £10,000 a year; and the third those with £1,000 a year; allowing a wide margin both above and below each figure. Now I suppose that these distinctions have always been recognized, and in days gone by people used to cut their coats according to their cloth and regulate their expenditure more or less by their income. But the peculiarity of these latter days is that the ten-thousand-a-yearers emulate the expenditure of the millionaires, while that numerous band who 'haven't got a farthing' seem able to respond to every demand made by the exigencies of fashion. This is what Mr. Gladstone denounced as 'that imitative luxury which is tempting us all to ape our betters,' and it is due, at least in great part, to that Pactolus of ill-gotten gold which has poured in upon us from South Africa and submerged the ancient landmarks of refined and dignified living.

That you cannot judge of a man's income by his expenditure was once a paradox, but has become a

truism. I therefore abandon to match-making mothers the mysterious science by which a man's resources can be estimated, and I speak only of his expenditure. And here at once the problem of the Shakespeare and the champagne recurs to me for instruction and warning. For example, as the lecturer was vague about the cost of champagne, so I should be vague about the cost of building a country house; but I once heard one of Lord Beaconsfield's 'Neuchatels' inform a company not specially ignorant or credulous, that the work of forming and equipping his rural palace, with its park, woods, gardens, and appurtenances, cost him £100,000 a year for ten years, and that he had paid it out of income. After this staggering declaration £40,000 for a writing-table which has belonged to Napoleon dwindles into insignificance, and the feat of filling your dining-room with Gainsboroughs at £10,000 apiece seems hardly more exciting than a collection of engravings from Landseer.

I said at the outset that it was impossible to know by intuition the things on which another person might think it worth while to spend money. I presume it is a pleasure to write at a table which would endow an hospital, and to eat your cutlet under the eyes of portraits each one of which would start a younger son in the world. Such things are too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto them; but the worst mischief of these

colossal extravagances is that they strike root downwards, and visibly affect the general sense of proportion and the estimate of what is really worth having. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to buy the Ansidei Raffaelle for the nation, that *arbiter elegantiarum* the late Mr. Biggar, M.P., suggested that 'the article' should be brought down to the House of Commons and exhibited in the tea-room, in order that members might judge for themselves whether it was worth the money. If we, the Lazaruses of the world, could only see the objects on which Dives lavishes his gold, we should almost feel contented with our lowlier lot. Dives has a knack of filling his house with things unspeakably hideous, but priceless because they are unique; and when he points out to his visitor some monstrous freak of malachite and ormolu, with the assurance that there are only two of them in the world and the other is in the Louvre, it is difficult to repress an ejaculation of thankfulness. A summer-house decorated with tin ivy, and lamp-posts painted blue and and gold, may be expensive, but certainly are not beautiful, appendages to a country house. A winter-garden full of artificial rockwork and electric light may have its charms for the well-regulated mind; but it is quaintly balanced by a library containing only three books—even though those three are works of such unquestioned authority as the Hebrew Psalter,

Bradshaw, and Dr. Robson Roose on Gout in the Stomach.

But the pleasure of riches expresses itself in forms even more curious than the delight of walking up marble stairs, eating off gold plates, or sleeping in ivory beds. When a noble lord, whose unconscionable longevity had sorely taxed the patience of his family, was at length gathered to his fathers, his eldest son's wife was cheered by the thought that at last she would be able to have a groom of the chambers as well as a butler. It was a long-cherished ambition, not easily understood by the 'dim, common populations' whose door is opened by a parlour-maid, but eminently characteristic of a society in which the Helots of Park Lane are suffered to set the standard of living. Powdered footmen have been recognized, ever since the days of Thackeray and Leech, as pillars of the social system; but perhaps not every-one is aware that hair-powder was formely subject to one of the 'assessed taxes.' In the Tory Reform Bill of 1867, as originally drafted, it had been proposed to confer the franchise on everyone who paid 'assessed taxes,' irrespective of other qualification. Disraeli, who was to bring in the Bill, casually asked the Parliamentary draftsman what the Assessed Taxes were. When he was informed, he exclaimed, 'That franchise must come out. If we build the Constitution on footmen's hair-powder we shall be the laughing-stock

of Europe.' Had he lived to the present day, I am persuaded that he would have found the tax a most popular impost with South African Society. Time out of mind people have been ready and willing to pay substantial sums, to impoverish their younger children, and embarrass their posterity for the sake of a coronet or even a baronetcy. The pleasure of being called 'My Lord' or 'Sir George' is surely one of the most unsubstantial that mankind can enjoy, and our readiness to spend hard money for titles of honour should surely redeem us from the reproach of being an unimaginative people.

With Hedonism I began, and with Hedonism I end. Those forms of expenditure which I have been discussing may seem to us, who have no chance of emulating them, capricious and even unnatural. But I repeat that no one can tell by intuition what will please another; and in its sense of enjoyment mankind remains incalculably diverse. A very rich woman went to condole with a friend who, owing to an unexpected alteration in a will, had narrowly missed a great inheritance. The disinherited lady said, with perfect sincerity, 'I dare say it's just as well as it is. I should have hated the feeling that I was envied for my wealth.' To which her friend responded sympathetically, 'My dear, I'd much rather be envied than pitied.'

XXXIV

DRINKING AND DRUNKENNESS

BERTIE STANHOPE — the name already belongs to literature and will serve as well as another—was what is commonly called 'a cheery boy,' which, being interpreted, means that he kept very bad company, sate up to all hours in the morning, and drank a great deal more than was good for him. 'By Jove, I had a thirst this morning!' he would cheerfully exclaim to a boon companion of the previous night; 'I wouldn't have parted with it for a fiver.' One day a long-suffering creditor, with an 'account rendered' for boots or cigars, called early at Bertie's flat, and asked the porter at what time Mr. Stanhope breakfasted. 'Breakfast!' was the reply. 'Bless you, he don't breakfast. But he's generally sick about eleven.' *Hic breve vivitur.* This kind of system goes on swimmingly for a while, but sooner or later comes a day of reckoning, and poor Bertie began to find that his digestion was no longer what it had once been. So he betook himself to the leading authority on

peptic troubles—a learned baronet who combined the attributes of a physician, a clergyman, and a judge. After a careful examination Sir Grosvenor Le Draughte said, with oracular solemnity, 'I am sorry to tell you, sir, that, owing to the course of life which you have followed, the coats of your stomach are completely destroyed.' 'Are they, by Jove?' exclaimed Bertie, not a whit abashed. 'Then the beggar will have to do his work in his shirt-sleeves, and that's all about it.'

Now I detest exaggeration; and, badly as I think of the present condition of Society, I do not suggest that it contains many Bertie Stanhopes. During the eighteenth century, and at least the first quarter of the nineteenth, only the most rigid moralists regarded drunkenness as a vice. In many circles it was a manly accomplishment or, at the worst, a joke. Queen Victoria's early reign saw a marked improvement in that as well as in other departments of social life. Just as men had to leave off their familiar oaths because it was impossible to swear before a young lady, so they had to adapt their drinking habits to the customs of a refined and sober Court. For more than sixty years drunkenness has been regarded as a social offence, and the drunkard as a disgraced and ruined man. Bertie Stanhope still exists, as, I suppose, he always has existed and always will exist. But his

career in Society is extremely brief. Decent men and refined women will not meet a drunkard; and even the most unprincipled hosts, when driven to choose between the sober many and the drunken few, let the drunken go to the wall. Lord Beaconsfield once said that the most ludicrous sight on earth was the incipient intoxication of a man in spectacles. But Society has become increasingly blind to the ludicrous aspect, and increasingly determined that, whether old and spectacled, or young and curly, the drunkard shall not indulge his genius in his friend's dining-rooms. Once excluded from Society, Bertie Stanhope's downward career is swift, and his end, as a rule, unpitied. It is a painful picture. Let us avert our gaze.

But though I freely admit that drunkards are seldom seen in Society, I cannot share the optimistic belief of those social critics who think that Society is temperate. Seventy years ago Samuel Wilberforce, then rector of Brightstone, in the Isle of Wight, wrote in his diary—'A good Audit dinner: 23 people drank 11 bottles of wine, 28 quarts of beer, 2½ of spirits, and 12 bowls of punch; and would have drunk twice as much if not restrained.' *A good Audit dinner* indeed, even judged by laic standards; and it is satisfactory, though surprising, to read the Rector's complacent comment: 'None, we hope, drunk.' Mr. Gladstone, conspicuous from his Oxford days for his moderation

in the use of wine, told me that, until Sir Andrew Clarke limited him on grounds of health to a certain number of glasses, he had never thought of counting them. 'One drank what was put in one's glass without counting or questioning.' When these were the drinking habits of even sober Society, a statistical enquiry into the amount consumed in a year might be expected to yield some startling results. But the late Lord Derby used to say that the cellar-books at Knowsley and St. James's Square had been carefully kept for a hundred years, and that the number of bottles drunk in a year had not diminished. The only alteration was in the alcoholic strength of the wines consumed. Burgundy, port, and Madeira had made way for light claret, hock, and champagne. Luncheon, as I have already pointed out, is now an earlier dinner, and luncheon-eaters continue to put away a satisfactory amount of wine and spirits, beer and liqueurs. At some houses of the 'Neuchatel' type champagne is as regular an accompaniment of luncheon as of dinner, and at balls and evening parties it flows like water. I know men, not in the least degree topers, who always drink claret for breakfast. We tickle our appetites with sherry and bitters, 'top up' with port or brown sherry, correct our excesses with Kimmel, and nerve ourselves for physical or mental efforts with brandy and soda.

Some years ago an Illustrious Personage was giving a picnic at Homburg. All hands were piped for waiting at the luncheon, and a smart little pony-boy came toddling round with a magnum of champagne. The illustrious host asked a young lady to have some Rhine wine, and she replied with great simplicity, 'No, thank you, sir; I'm waiting for the boy.' The saying passed into a proverb, and 'the Boy' became the recognized name for what has been more periphrastically described as 'the foaming grape of Eastern France.' And alas! the Boy found some of his most passionate votaries among the smart women of Society. Thereby hangs a pitiful tale. Although drunkenness has so markedly decreased among men, I believe there can be no doubt that it has increased among women. A few years ago Lady Frederick Cavendish read, I think at a Church Congress, a paper on the drinking habits of modern ladies, which drew down upon her some violent criticism. I myself have seen enough tragedies of this kind to justify the most passionate oratory which ever was vented from the Temperance platform. It is useless to recall the details; but in most of these cases, if I am correctly informed, a doctor's ill-judged advice was the beginning of the trouble. A delicate and highly-strung woman, living a life of eternal racket which demands twice the strength she possesses, is counselled

to have a glass of port whenever she feels collapsed, or to keep a brandy-flask in her dressing-case. She follows the prescription, feels better for it, increases it, depends upon it, craves for it. 'The rest is silence.'

The great multiplication of ladies' clubs has, I believe, contributed to the same result. A woman who would think twice before she drank an unusual quantity of wine at her own table, is hampered by no such scruples when dining at a club where she is unobserved and unknown. A doctor in great practice at the West End once said to me, 'Where the public-house slays its thousands, the grocer's licence slays its tens of thousands.' It is so terribly easy for a confidential maid to slip round the corner to the grocer's shop and bring back a bottle of sherry under that waterproof-cloak which covers such a multitude of sins. It is impossible for one who has ever seen a refined and happy home—sometimes even a home of religious profession—broken up and desecrated by the drinking habit in women, to write of the subject as if it were—like some other social misdoings—in part a joke. It is a curse, and as a curse must be faced and fought. The moral ruin of the whole character—not merely a partial declension from the right, but the actual transformation from good into bad of a nature hitherto virtuous and self-respecting—is apparently the characteristic result of

secret drinking. The head of one of the most successful Homes for inebriate women has told me that the loss of the sense of veracity in the victim is one of the most difficult elements in the cure. At this Home the system is one of moral and material indulgence—good food, good tea and coffee, bright rooms, pretty gardens, air and exercise, and cheerfulness. But two rules of discipline are rigidly enforced. The inmates must deliver into safe keeping all private resources, such as money, jewellery, watches, or valuables of any kind which can be converted into money. They must be content to have no writing-desks or despatch-boxes or dressing-cases, not even locked trunks or closed cupboards—nothing, in a word, where a secret supply of the poison could be harboured.

I conclude, as I began, by saying that I have no wish to represent either open drunkenness or secret tippling as a characteristic vice of modern Society. I only record my dissent from those optimistic philosophers who seem to think that, because convivial spirits no longer disappear under the table after dinner; because statesmen addressing the House of Commons no longer see two Speakers in the Chair; therefore the battle of temperance has been won. I fear that this department of social morality is exactly one of those in which one sees the untruthfulness of Burke's famous dictum that vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness.

XXXV.

EFFEMINACY AND EMANCIPATION

'BELGRAVIA is a truly remarkable region, for all the women are brave and all the men modest.' This rather cryptic saying belongs to a period when it was thought improper for a lady to walk alone in London. Between 1825 and 1830 Lord Grosvenor converted the 'Five Fields' behind Grosvenor Place into a residential quarter and covered it with new and splendid houses. The central Square, called 'Belgrave' from the landlord's second title, gave its name to the whole district. The word 'Belgravia' was at first thought a *bon mot*, but it soon became the name of an area as clearly defined as Mayfair or Bloomsbury. Great families who wanted more elbow-room and air and quiet than they could obtain in the older parts of fashionable London eagerly colonized the new quarter. Its position was retired, and in those distant days its character and aspect were semi-rural. It led to nowhere and was comparatively free from traffic, and all

the inhabitants were rich people or their dependents. Thus it came about that ladies living in this favoured region, and running no risk of publicity or insult, gradually emancipated themselves from the tyrannous usage which required them either to go about in carriages or, if they set foot to the ground, to place themselves under male escort. They got into the way of walking about their own district unaccompanied and unprotected, just as fancy led them, and thereby, procured for Belgravia the equivocal compliment which stands at the head of this chapter.

The occasion for the gibe has, of course, passed away. This is the age of Social Freedom, and woman's right to walk where she pleases has long been conceded by the tribunals having jurisdiction in such causes. But the inversion of parts which the saying implies has suggested some parallels in the social life of the present day. The young are exhausted and the old are frivolous. Men are effeminate and women masculine. The exhaustion of the young is a curious symptom. Some of it no doubt is real, and has its origin either in heredity or in personal neglect of the laws of right living. But partly it is an affectation. It is now the right thing to despise enthusiasm, romance, zeal, and eagerness. To care for a good cause, to be on fire about a high ideal, would draw down on Freddy or Bertie the just contempt of his congeners and contem-

poraries. Even keenness about sport or amusement is thought a little ludicrous. A serene indifference to everything in heaven and earth that does not minister to material comfort is both philosophy and fashion. 'He's simply too effete for words,' was a sister's proud description of a perfectly healthy and able-bodied brother. The confessions and doubts of a jaded Epicurean nearly always disclose some one exception to the general rule that everything is vanity; and so these precocious and exhausted Solomons are not ashamed to exhibit a very genuine eagerness about money. Their watchword is 'Biz.' They will discuss with animation whether the chance of winning a few pounds at Poker justifies the expense and trouble of going to visit a friend in Yorkshire, and will sum-up that it is 'barely good enough.' They will talk for hours at a stretch about investments, and will tell you how in some dubious speculation they 'managed to get in on the ground floor,' thanks to the good offices of Adrian Neuchatel. 'He is a most appalling bounder, but his tip is worth having.' Being fond of money, our young friends are naturally interested in racing, though of horses they know no more than the lady who said in my hearing at Lady Crewe's wedding, 'What splendid horses those are in Lord Rosebery's carriage! No doubt they are some of his racing stud from Epsom. Undeterred by any considerations of ignorance in

the matter of horseflesh, they converse in a darkling undertone about Newmarket and the Grand National, and, like Spavin, in the 'Book of Snobs,' are ready to take your 'five-and-twenty to one about Brother to Bluenose.'

But while the thoughts of our exhausted youth are thus prematurely concentrated on material comfort and the money which supplies it, the old are increasingly and supernaturally frisky. On the rare occasions when I revisit the world I see the evergreens of Society—men and women who were old when I was young—enjoying themselves with undefeated vivacity. Youths such as I have been describing are too much exhausted to dance, and content themselves with supping and sitting-out. But portly gentlemen who will never see sixty again preside over the mysteries of the Cotillon, Cabinet Ministers frequent the Derby, grandmothers skate at Prince's, dowagers throw their shrivelled souls into the whirlpool of Bridge, and at balls *paralysis agitans* lends a redoubled brilliancy to the tiaras of venerable age.

That the young as a rule are prematurely old and the old unseasonably young is certainly a characteristic of the time. I wonder whether male effeminacy is more prevalent in this than in any former age. It would be in the highest degree absurd to say that the mass of young men of the present day are effeminate. The

battlefields of South Africa would belie the slander; and so, in a minor degree, would the Boat-Race and the Football Field, the deer-forests of Scotland, and the pastures of Leicestershire.

But though it is true that the mass of our young men are wholly undegenerate, it is also true that luxury and self-indulgence have produced a type of Effeminate Man who thirty years ago, if he existed, did not parade his degeneracy. I know exactly the type which I am describing, and one instance shall stand for all. This youth, whom we will call Cyril Belvoir, had an uncomfortable knack of improving his complexion. A fox-hunting squire who was his neighbour in Loamshire one day said, with disconcerting directness, 'My dear Cyril, may I, as an old friend, ask why you stick all that stuff on your face?' Poor Cyril, a little abashed, said that he had an irritable skin which obliged him to apply emollients after shaving. To which the tormenter replied, with brutal sincerity, 'But you don't shave the tip of your nose.' Well, Cyril not only paints his face, but he improves his figure with stays. He wears bangles round his wrists, and changes his jewellery for the different pursuits of the day as other people change their clothes. He seldom leaves London, for he does not like to be beyond the reach of his *coiffeur*, his barber, and his doctor. Of all forms of sport or

athletics he is honestly and confessedly afraid. If he got on a horse it would bolt with him, and if he were to bicycle he would fall off. He is afraid of a collision in a hansom and of infectious disease in a four-wheeler. So, as the doctor tells him that he must have some exercise, he goes up to Hampstead Heath in a brougham, and takes the air on a donkey, while the brougham slowly follows, to pick up the pieces in case of accident. But let no one imagine that Cyril is without interests in life. He suspects that men despise him, and he does not care much for girls; but he is devoted to old ladies, and they to him. He is a recognized authority on lace and china. He collects snuffboxes and Apostle spoons. His breed of Japanese lapdogs is renowned. He makes the most beautiful screens with old prints and floral illustrations; and, in country-houses where he is very much at home, he comes down with a piece of cross-stitch or crewel-work which he developes into a kettle-holder while the ruder spirits are killing pheasants. The exhaustion induced by these labours compels Cyril to eat and drink a good deal. He breakfasts in bed, but at luncheon he will combine tart and cream in quantities which stagger credibility. A corrective dose of cherry-brandy sets him all right again for five-o'clock tea and buttered cakes. Between tea and dinner he tells ghost-stories or plays Ping-Pong; and after dinner he sings 'My

Queen, my Queen,' or recites the 'Washerwoman of Finchley Common.'

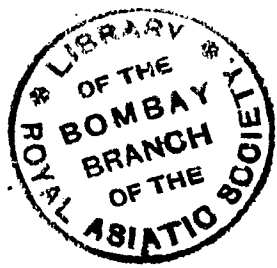
Such is the Effeminate Man of the period; and he is more than balanced in the social scale by the Masculine Woman. Which is the more agreeable phenomenon it is not easy to decide. Of the Masculine Woman it may be alleged that whatever men do she does. Ever since the days of Die Vernon, a beautiful girl on a good horse has been one of the most fascinating sights in the world, and no one ever ventured to charge Die with masculinity; but comparatively few women ventured into competition with that most delightful of all heroines. The fox-hunting ladies of the first half of the nineteenth century could be counted on one hand. The Lady Salisbury who was burnt with the west wing of Hatfield House in 1835, and who was the Prime Minister's grandmother, kept a pack of hounds and hunted with them when she was so old that she had to be tied on to the saddle. Lady Arabella Vane, afterwards Lady Alvanley, who died in 1864, had in her youth been a famous performer with the hounds of her father, Lord Darlington. The scarlet habit of Lady Caroline Powlett, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, who died in 1883, was a tradition of the Cottesmore country. Mrs. Jack Villiers (afterwards Lady William Osborne), who gives her name to one of the best coverts in the Vale of

Aylesbury and who died in 1892, is the only lady on a horse in the famous picture of the meet of the Quorn. And wherever in sporting literature, such as Whyte Melville's and Trollope's novels, we encounter the Hunting Woman, she is always represented as a marked and isolated though fascinating figure. The last fifty years saw a gradual increase in the number of women who hunt, and during the last twenty years the fashion has enormously extended. At Melton, Oakham, and Leighton Buzzard the Hunting Woman fairly divides the honours with the men. Good hands and good nerves and good horses enable her to see the best of the fun; and over a chop at a wayside inn she will chat quite knowingly about the beautiful cast which the Huntsman made, will condemn the First Whip as hopelessly slow, and wonder where on earth that other woman got her habit.

But hunting is only one of the Masculine Woman's accomplishments. She swims, rows, fences, skates, and drives four-in-hand. She plays hockey and golf, and, unless incontinently dismissed for 'petticoat before wicket,' can make a decent score. She braces her nerves with a matutinal header, smokes her cigarette with genuine gusto, and when you are helping her to a whisky and soda, begs you not to be afraid of the whisky.

But far more objectionable than any of these

masculinities is the spectacle of the Shooting Woman. She is the creature of our decadence. There is something unspeakably repulsive in the sight of a woman enjoying herself in wounds and blood and slaughter. I hear of such a one, economical and athletic, who is never so happy as when she is prowling about the park with her gun, potting rabbits for the servants' dinner. The death-shriek of a hare is as music in her ears. Another, not long ago declared that what she really enjoyed in salmon-fishing was to feel the dying struggle of the fish. And then we turn up our eyes in pious horror at the Spanish ladies and their bull-fights! Admirable, indeed, is our national self-righteousness.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XXXVI

THE PLEASURES OF PUBLICITY

ONE of the most marked characteristics of modern Society is its love of publicity. In no respect is there a more signal departure from the traditions of the old school. "'Hide thy life' was a precept which English aristocracy laid thoroughly to heart. We all know the case of a great nobleman who made tunnels under the roads in his park lest the public should gaze unbidden on his august countenance, and surrounded the back-garden of his London house with walls so high that no neighbouring eye could penetrate his solitude. I remember another who always drove about London in a brougham with wooden shutters; and yet another, who when he had to be measured by a new bootmaker, thrust his illustrious foot through a hole cut in his bedroom door. These, no doubt, were extreme and morbid instances, but they only exaggerated the universal character and habit of good Society. Men, of course, always lived a life more or less open and exposed. Business and pleasure alike required them to

come into the public view; but they were scrupulously careful to guard their domestic lives securely from prying eyes, and regarded home as a sanctuary in which they could safely take refuge from the excitements and contentions of public life. It is true that, as I have pointed out, the Social Journalists of the time, like their successors of the present day, set privacy at defiance, and paraded, under a thin disguise of asterisks and initials, every private scandal and domestic tribulation which they could ferret out. But they did it at their own peril, in pursuit of their craft, and in direct hostility to the wishes and tastes of the people whom they described.

In a Society where even men tried to guard their domestic life from the impertinence of outsiders it was natural that women should live in an almost Oriental seclusion. Instances to the contrary, of course, there were; such as Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who bought the butcher's vote for Mr. Fox with a kiss, and Jane, Duchess of Gordon, who raised the Gordon Highlanders by giving them the King's shilling out of her mouth. But these instances were rare and marked, and all the arrangements of social life aimed at securing privacy for women. Sir Algernon West, who grew up just as the old order was beginning to yield place to the new, tells us that 'no lady would willingly have driven down St. James's Street or have dreamt of

stopping at a club-door.' When a lady went to the play, she was carefully hidden in the recesses of a heavily-draped box. Ladies did not attend political meetings, much less take part in them; and, if they wished to hear a debate in the House of Commons, they mounted into a kind of loft above the roof of the chamber and listened through the ventilator. Even in church the enormous family-pew, withdrawn into the seclusion of the gallery or the chancel, surrounded with high walls and draped with thick curtains, preserved the devotions of His Lordship and Her Ladyship from the too-eager gaze of the untitled vulgar. In the early days of the Railway great people travelled majestically, though insecurely, in their own carriages fastened on to railway-trucks. When, yielding to the argument of safety, they condescended to the railway-carriage, they used to take all the places in the compartment in order to avoid the horrors of publicity. The adventurousness of a great lady who travelled without this precaution is characteristically quizzed by Lord Beaconsfield in 'Sybil.' 'I suppose you have heard of Lady Vanilla's trip from Birmingham? She came up with Lady Laura, and two of the most gentlemanlike men sitting opposite her—never met, she says, two more intelligent men. She begged one of them at Wolverhampton to change seats with her, and he was most politely willing to

comply with her wishes, only it was necessary that his companion should move at the same time, for they were chained together! Two gentlemen sent to town for picking a pocket at Shrewsbury Races. A Countess and a Felon! So much for public conveyances. But Lady Vanilla is one of those who will talk with everybody.'

Seclusion of life was accompanied by restraint of speech. Reticence as well as repose stamped the caste of Vere de Vere. People kept their private concerns to themselves; never talked of health or money or business; and shrank from parading their deepest convictions. Mrs. General in 'Little Dorrit' scarcely burlesqued the tone of good Society when she said that 'perfect breeding forms no opinions and is never demonstrative.' The rule of life was dignified and dull.

Now if the foregoing is a true account of Society as it used to be—and my information leads me to think that it is not far wrong—we have arrived at the exact opposite of what our predecessors esteemed good breeding. We live in and on Publicity. Where our fathers repelled the 'Society Journalist' from their doors and horsewhipped him if they caught him at his tricks, we encourage him to the top of his bent. Only twenty years ago I have known a man blackballed at a club because he was suspected of having written for a 'Society Journal,' and a guest who published the

names of his fellow-guests at a dinner-party was never again permitted to cross the violated threshold. But now the smartest people take the 'Society Journalist' to their bosoms. He dines with them in London and stays with them in the country. He is invited to inspect the bedrooms and examine the plate and scrutinize the family-jewels. He is encouraged to write descriptive 'pars' about his host's chest-measurement and the shape of his hostess's mouth, the principles on which they educate their children, and the system of diet by which they keep in check their hereditary gout. The Interviewer is abroad in the land, and to him people of the highest cultivation disclose their private beliefs in religion and politics and literature. They supply lists of 'Hymns that have Helped me' and 'Prayers that have Pushed me;' they enumerate their 'Hundred Favourite Books;' they resuscitate the memories of the nursery and the private school; they describe their illnesses, their medicines, and their recoveries; they narrate their spiritual experiences, and tell how the smoking flax of their faith was almost quenched by 'Robert Elsmere' and requickened into flame by 'Lux Mundi.' Reticence has fled to Jupiter or Saturn, and, as all speech is unguarded, so all life is public. It begins with an early ride in Rotten Row, and goes on with a constitutional walk in Piccadilly or Bond Street. In

the afternoon there is the grand parade of driving, shopping, and lounging, all in the full gaze of the public eye. All the places of amusement within reach of London are thronged, and everybody eyes everybody else with the most unembarrassed scrutiny. By dinner-time the restaurants are crowded with people who a few years ago would no more have dined in public than they would have bathed in the Serpentine. Beautiful women, returning unescorted from race-meetings, eat their chop in the public dining-car and drink their brandy and soda amid a hilarious crowd of 'sporting gents.' At the opera and the play people struggle for the most conspicuous seats, and feel that they have failed if they have not contrived to concentrate public attention upon themselves.

Or suppose that we are dealing with people who are not mere pleasure-seekers. We shall soon find that the instincts of patriotism, philanthropy, and even religion are by no means incompatible with the love of publicity. A judge's wife perched on the Bench and prodding her learned lord with a fan when he nods is a highly unedifying spectacle, and she is happily matched with the candidate's wife who enlivens the election by singing:

> We'll put the Tory host to rout,
> And shove old Trueblue up the spout.

The lady who moves Resolutions at political meetings,

the lady who conducts 'Gospel Temperance Missions,' and the lady who lectures on the rights and wrongs of her sex, all depart conspicuously from the restraint of old days. Works of mercy, which formerly were performed with the most modest secrecy, are now advertized through every available medium. 'Lady Fitz-Battleaxe, whose devotion to female felons is well known, has recently given a tea-party to twelve selected inhabitants of Aylesbury Prison.' 'Lady Kew is engaged in some highly-interesting researches on heredity in Pauper Lunatic-Asylums, and proposes to develope the results in a course of lectures at the Royal Institution.' 'Lady Emily Sheepshanks has been invited by the Scottish Temperance Association to give a series of addresses in the northern capital, and leaves London for Edinburgh on Monday night.'

According to modern standards, to be famous is the chief joy of human life, and even to be notorious is preferable to being unknown.

XXXVII

DECORUM

ALL lovers of 'Friendship's Garland' will remember the Paris correspondent of the 'Daily Telegraph' whom his colleagues called Nick 'because of the diabolical salt which sparkled in his deliverances.' In a discussion on the Deceased Wife's Sister one of the disputants made some allusion to Delicacy, and Nick, who had all the sensitive temperament of genius, seemed inexplicably struck by his word, which he kept repeating to himself. '*Delicacy*,' said he—'*Delicacy*; surely I have heard that word before! Yes, in other days,' he went on dreamily, 'in my fresh, enthusiastic youth; before I knew Sala, before I wrote for that infernal paper, before I called Hepworth Dixon's style lithe and sinewy——'

'Collect yourself, my friend,' said I, laying my hand on his shoulder; 'you are unmanned.'

Well, I undergo an emotion not dissimilar to Nick's when I come to close quarters with the subject which I had assigned to this chapter. I had meant to write

about the decay of Decorum, and now I catch myself repeating—'*Decorum*; surely I have heard that word before! Yes, in other days, in my fresh, enthusiastic youth; before I became acquainted with "Smart Society" or learned the habits and language which they have substituted for the ancient manners.' Of course I am aware that there have been very indecorous periods of English Society before the present day, and that the idea of what is decorous has varied considerably in different ages. Sir Walter Scott tells us that ladies of the highest refinement read Fielding and Smollett aloud, and tea-making hostesses d——d the too fervent kettle. My comparison is not between those very plain-spoken days and ours (though even in that case I am not sure that the balance would be in our favour), but between Society as purged and disciplined by Queen Victoria's influence and Society as it now follows its own sweet will.

Perhaps the most marked characteristic of the ancient manners was the formal deference paid to women. Every woman was treated like a queen. When a lady stood, no man sate. When a lady approached, cigars were thrown away. No man lounged or crossed his legs when he was talking to a lady, and a well-bred man contrived to get out of a drawing-room without turning his back upon his hostess. If through laziness or familiarity a man

forgot due decorum in these or similar respects the great dames of Society had no scruples about correcting him. Sir William Gregory once fought a duel in Osterley Park, and Lady Jersey, to whom it belonged, declined his further acquaintance on the ground that for a gentleman to be shot dead on her land without her permission would have been an intolerable liberty. Caroline, Duchess of Cleveland, once rebuked an official of the Court for what she thought a breach of decorum at her dinner-table, and on his replying in high dudgeon that 'he thought he ought to know how to behave,' she rejoined, 'You ought; but, as you don't, I instruct you.'

Now all this kind of decorum is as extinct as the Dodo. Men and women sit in whatever attitudes are most comfortable, and exchange confidences through a cloud of cigarette-smoke. A man who backed out of the room would be ridiculed as a dancing-master, and if he will open a door for a lady or pick up her handkerchief it is about the extent of his chivalrous exertion. Not long ago a lady told me that she was struggling along Belgrave Square in a high wind and storm of rain when a brougham drove up, and a man, putting his head out of it, said, 'Oh, Mrs. ——, I wish you would ring that door-bell for me. It is too wet to get out.' The loss of external decorum is the outward and visible sign of an internal deterioration.

As the ceremonies of intercourse have disappeared, the restrictions on speech have gone with them. And here an illustrative anecdote occurs to my recollection. A lady was sending her youngest boy to Eton, and in talking over his new life she gave him the sagest of all mothers' counsels—never to listen to anything which he would not like his sisters to hear. He gazed with awestruck eyes, and then replied with emotion: 'I should think not, indeed, mother! If Polly and Kitty couldn't hear it, it must be awful.'

One of the departments in which this abrogation of reticence is most noticeable is the department of health. In old days a slight cold was about the only illness which could be mentioned in Society, and then you had to take heed that none of the accompaniments or symptoms of the illness were described. I have heard a tradition of a high-bred dame who died untimely because, having something the matter with her organ of digestion, she insisted on telling the doctor that she had a pain in her chest. The twentieth century will produce no martyrs of that type. Every ill to which flesh is heir is discussed in mixed company with the most engaging freedom. In old days feet were never mentioned; whereas now the claims of rival chiropodists give rise to animated debates. The agonies endured at sea were not recalled on land; but

nowadays the competing remedies for *mal-de-mer* are canvassed with all the familiarity of intimate acquaintance. At a dinner-party a very pretty girl lately complained to me of 'Indy,' and was beyond measure astonished that I did not recognize the diminutive of indigestion. Men and women who frequent Homburg or Carlsbad compare with the utmost vivacity the merits and effects of their respective springs, and 'Handy Jane' is a lady's affectionate nickname for the produce of Hunyadi Janos. The recent developments of abdominal surgery have enriched the table-talk of Society with a vast amount of anatomical lore. Not long ago I was sitting in chilly weather on a damp lawn. One of the ladies, shuddering, said, 'This is just the kind of thing to give one appendicitis.' Whereupon another replied, 'I wonder how many of us have got an appendix left.' Again, with respect to more serious matters than those of health, the barriers of reticence have notably broken down. Satirists used to be sarcastic about 'sins which modern Society is ashamed to talk about but not ashamed to commit.' The taunt has lost all its poignancy, for, whether people in Society commit these enormities or not, they certainly are ready enough to talk about them. I speak advisedly when I say that I know no offence too scandalous or too abhorrent

for respectable matrons to discuss; and though, of course, the discussion takes the form of reprobation, it is a surprising departure from conversational decorum.

Another notable instance in which established notions of what is decorous have given way is the social liberty of girls. I know a house not a hundred miles from Richmond Hill where till quite recently four maiden sisters, all past eighty, lived together like a family in 'Cranford.' One of these ladies drew an interesting comparison between her own lot and that of the modern girl. She said: 'In my day, unless we married off very quickly we were put on one side. The unmarried girl was despised and neglected. No attempt was made to amuse or interest her—all that was kept for the younger ones. And yet she was not permitted the slightest liberty. My sisters and I were never allowed to go about or do anything on our own account. Even our clothes were ordered for us until we were quite middle-aged women.' In days much more recent than those, young ladies were only allowed to waltz with their brothers or cousins. Their acquaintances were limited to square dances. No sitting-out at a ball was permitted. At the end of each dance the man took his partner back to her chaperone, to whom he made a bow as he restored

her charge. In 1866 a social poet described a young lady as

> Still on some minute allowance finding collars, boots, and gloves;
> Still to cousinly flirtations limiting her list of loves;
> Still by stern domestic edict charged on no account to read
> Any of Miss Brontë's novels or to finish 'Adam Bede.'

What a contrast between Then and Now! Girls who, like my friends from 'Cranford,' do not marry in their first three or four seasons, soon break away from home. In old days, if a daughter did not get on well with her parents she was spoken of as a 'horrid girl'—condemned, and, if possible, suppressed. Now she is encouraged. 'One cannot expect a girl of her age to go on being a daughter—and her mother is really very tiresome.' So the young lady takes her portion of goods, engages a flat, lives there with a like-minded friend, or sometimes only with her maid; walks and cycles and skates, or writes and reads at the British Museum, according to her inclination; dines at her club, or gives dinner-parties at her flat, or takes a box at the theatre and fills it with her male and female friends; wanders about Europe, or makes a trip to the Antipodes. Certainly the Bachelor Girl is a notable sign of the times.

And even as regards the young ladies who are still under their mother's wing, liberty is not much less complete. They meet their boy-friends at all hours

and places, dance and sup and 'sit out,' drink tea in Kensington Gardens, and get lost together in river-side woods. They ride together, skate together, cycle together, play cricket and golf and hockey together—even bathe together. The other day I was looking at a girl's photograph-book, and came across a picture of a swimming-bath with one swathed figure flying through the air and another standing majestic on the brink. To my astonished enquiry the reply was, 'Oh! that's a snapshot of me learning to take a header; that's Tom teaching me; and the head in the water is the man we were staying with.'

Decorum? Well, perhaps not exactly what our fathers meant by the word. But it is all right. We have lost much by the abolition of the ancient manners; but nearly every evil has some corresponding good, and I believe that we have everything to gain from the removal of artificial restrictions on the social intercourse of the young. In this regard, if in no other, I am inclined to shout, with the democratic orators in Hyde Park, 'Three cheers for the Social Revolution!'

XXXVIII

CLOACA MAXIMA

In recent chapters I have been describing some of the more obvious vices of Society. I have spoken of its utter irreligiousness, its worship of money, its frantic extravagance, its indifference to all moral issues, its cynical absorption in pleasure and self-indulgence and self-seeking, its impatience of restraint, privacy, and decorum. Now it would be obvious to pursue the odious theme a little further and examine the less conspicuous but even graver evils, which lie concealed only just below the surface of Society and not seldom appear above it. Such a course would indeed be obvious, but frankly it is impossible. The evils which I have in mind are not of such a character as can be suitably discussed. Suggestion and allusion are all that is possible, and suggestion and allusion are not far to seek. In spite of glaring vulgarity and crude exaggeration, 'The Visits of Elizabeth' portrayed a certain aspect of social life. The 'Englishwoman's Love-letters' displayed another. A third may be found

in 'Sir Richard Calmady.' And social life contains even darker elements than these, and conceals some moral aberrations which English fiction, as yet, leaves undescribed. A friend of mine who knows the world as well as most people has described the condition of Society in a passage which I may paraphrase but must not quote. We are living in an age of decadence, and we pretend not to know it. Not a feature is wanting, though we cannot mention the ugliest of them. We are Romans of the worst period, given up to luxury and effeminacy, and caring for nothing but money. Courage is so out of fashion that we boast of cowardice. We care no more for beauty in art, but only for a brutal realism. Sport has lost its manliness, and is a matter of pigeons from a trap or a mountain of crushed pheasants to sell to your own tradesman. Religion is coming down to jugglery, and table-turnings, and philandering with mysteries brought, like the rites of Isis, from the East; and as for Patriotism, it is turned on, like beer, at election-times, or worked like a mechanical doll by wire-pullers. There is not an ounce of manliness in the country; and as for the women, nothing draws the gentle sex like a child hanging by its toe-nails to the high trapeze or the chance of a wounded pigeon in their laps. If there were a gladiator-fight in the Albert Hall next season and the beaten man went down, the women would want his blood. 'We

have the honour of belonging to one of the most corrupt generations of the human race. To find its equal one must go back to the worst times of the Roman Empire, and look devilish close then. But, for all that, it's uncommonly amusing to live in an age of decadence. You see the funniest sights and you get every conceivable luxury, and you die before the irruption of the barbarians.'

When I write so pessimistically about the condition of Society, I must be understood as referring to that section—an ever-increasing one—which lives and moves and has its being in London. Into the Thames, as of old into the Tiber, all vices seem to flow. Virtue has retired into the country, and, if we were to search for the lost graces and charities of the English character, we should find them amid woods and cornfields and village greens.

But every year people live less and less in the country and more and more in Town; every year London becomes more and more like that hideous 'Wen' which Cobbett imagined and reviled, drawing into itself all the life and resources of the body and poisoning what it draws. In days gone by people who had a house in London and another in the country commonly gave three, or at the most four, months to London, and spent the rest in what they regarded as really Home. Now the proportions are reversed, and

the general impoverishment which has overtaken all classes except the alien millionaires, is made an excuse for the neglect of the country. To those who worship the town and its pursuits a country house without a party is the ideal of dulness. To keep a country house full of company all the autumn and winter is both expensive and unprofitable; so more and more they incline to desert the country as soon as the 'big shoot' is over, and retreat on London, where Bridge and Poker banish the fiend of *ennui*, where 'cutlet for cutlet' is the order of the day, and where you are pretty sure of a return for any social expenditure. From November onwards, London is crowded with people who, a few years ago, would have been pottering about after pheasants or foxes, giving balls to tenants, and entertaining school-children with Christmas-trees. Even in September you meet these willing exiles in London, returning from Homburg or Doncaster; and, when they go away from Saturday to Monday during the season, they contrive to carry London with them and 'lead a sort of factitious boudoir-life in their provincial drawing-rooms.'

Now the mischief of this ever-increasing absorption in the town is that it engenders a life which is absolutely divorced from duty. Life in London is devoted to pleasure, or, at best, to profit. In the country this is not the case. A higher tradition pre-

vails. Far as we have fallen from the ancient manners, the idea that a man living on his own land has definite duties to his estate, his neighbours, and the poor, has not yet faded from the national conscience. In the country, for very shame's sake if from no higher motive, men look after their cottages, purify the water-supply, take part in the deliberations of the Parish Council, and contribute respectably, if not profusely, to churches and Cottage-Hospitals. Ladies visit the poor, and carry savoury messes to the sick, and train young servants, and teach in Sunday-Schools. All these things are recognitions, made with greater or less good-will, of the principle that property has its duties, as well as its rights, and that no one can decently live a life of unmixed self-indulgence and self-seeking. Thus the social tone of those who live wholly or mainly in their country houses is perceptibly higher than that of the pleasure-hunting hosts of London. In London property as a rule recognizes no duties, though it battens on its rights. To eat and drink, to be smart and to be amused, and to have, as the phrase is, 'a good time'—this is the be-all and end-all of social life in London. And no wonder that the germs of graver evils find a congenial lodgment in a soil thus prepared for them by indolence, materialism, and self-indulgence. I am no great admirer of our territorial system, but I must confess that, at this

period of threatening decadence, it serves a useful purpose in our social system. In spite of all that has come and gone, it still brings an important section of Society into contact with nature and human interests and all the 'sweet, sincere surroundings of country life;' and that contact is the salt which preserves the body politic from utter corruption and decay.

XXXIX

BANE AND ANTIDOTE

AMONG the excellent songs which the late Mr. Edward Bowen wrote for the boys of Harrow there was one called 'Giants.' In this ditty the poet sets forth, with much pomp of stately verse, the decadence of the School on the Hill. 'There were wonderful giants of old, you know,' boys of fabulous height and strength, cricketers who could drive a ball into the next county, scholars who astonished Balliol and put Senior Classics to shame. But all these glories belong to a period so remote as to be nearly mythical, and the Harrow boys of the present day are degenerate alike in mind and body, and 'growing duller and worse.' And then, in the closing verse, the poet makes, as the French say, a return upon himself, and bursts into a rollicking stanza of triumphant optimism:

> But I think all this is a lie, you know—
> I think all this is a lie;
> For the hero-race may come and go,
> But it doesn't exactly die!

Well, the function which that closing stanza performs

in the Harrow song I intend the present chapter to perform in my general estimate of English Society. In previous chapters I have said or implied the worst. I have not set down aught in malice, but certainly I have 'nothing extenuated.' I have given the result of my dispassionate observation, and have plainly stated my own conviction of the enormous deterioration in some important respects which Society has undergone since I first began to be interested in its doings. In reviewing my judgment I see no reason to reverse it. I wish with all my heart that I could say, with Edward Bowen, that, 'I think all this is a lie, you know,' but I believe it to be absolute truth. And yet, like Bowen, I make a return upon myself; not unsaying what I have said, but setting against it another testimony, in my belief equally true and equally founded on personal observation. 'The hero-race may come and go, But it doesn't exactly die.' The prophets may be hidden in the cave, but they will emerge in due season.

Perhaps this language about Heroes and Prophets may be too dithyrambic; so, laying it on one side and using the words of transparent truth and soberness, I record my conviction that, amid the countless and indescribable evils of our national life, there is still an element of strong and saving virtue. Let me illustrate my meaning by a concrete instance. A few years ago

a lieutenant in a smart Cavalry Regiment, the son of a great nobleman, and himself the inheritor of a large fortune, was killed by a fall from his horse. The day before the fatal accident he had spent an hour in the hospital, reading to and comforting a sick soldier of his troop, and this occupation, so unlike what the world assumes to be characteristic of a Lancer, was all of a piece with the rest of his short life. In his case Beauty was the Sacrament of Goodness, for he was one of the handsomest lads in the Army, and his character corresponded to his appearance. Even while he was at Eton he had been deeply impressed with the need of creating a public opinion among schoolboys in favour of Virtue. A boy who was known to have told a lie was disgraced. Was it impossible to make schoolboys feel that a violation of moral purity was equally disgraceful? After he had left Eton, and while he was preparing for the Army, he took definite steps towards the fulfilment of his ideal. Those unhappy people who know nothing of the nobler side of human nature associate virtue with unmanliness. Lord J—— T—— was as brave and as manly as he was chaste and loving; a fine rider, a keen polo-player, devoted to all athletic sports and physical exercises. Another of his characteristics was a thoughtful generosity. Shortly before his death he went to an older friend and broached a scheme which had long

been maturing in his mind. Ever since he had received a regular allowance from his father, he had always put aside a tenth as belonging to God, and now he begged the friend to take this tithe and administer it for him, without disclosing his name. 'Perhaps it might help some poor fellow through the University, or be useful in some other way.' 'When I come of age,' he added, 'the tenth of my income will be really worth something.' Had he lived a few months longer he would have become possessed of a great estate. *Deo aliter visum.* The stumble of a horse over a tramrail put a sudden end to a life full of the most beautiful promise, but that life remains a brilliant example of what a chivalrous young Englishman can be.

Can be—yes, and is. For of this I am well assured, that among young Englishmen of all grades and classes there is a vein of manly self-control and self-devotion which may yet prove to be the salvation of England when national judgments begin to overtake national sins. I have by no means forgotten the very different type of youth whom I have described in former chapters, with his paraded cynicism, his shameless love of money, his laziness and self-indulgence and profligacy. But the very spectacle of the impecunious lad who lives by his wits, or his wealthier congener who wears a fortune in jewellery, only serves to throw into high and admirable relief the better, if rarer, type on which I

build my hopes for the future of this country. We are officially informed that the supply of Clergy is falling off; but, though the young men at Oxford and Cambridge who are now seeking Holy Orders may be fewer than they were twenty years ago, I am convinced that their quality is better. There is nothing epicene or namby-pamby about them. They are fine, manly, active fellows, keen in mind and strong in body; men who have rowed for their colleges or played 'Rugger' for the University, and ready to consecrate all their splendid gifts of health and skill and trained endurance to the service of Religion and Humanity. Of the courage of our young soldiers it is unnecessary to speak, for a cowardly soldier is an inconceivable monstrosity. But the young officer of the present day is not merely brave. He is gentle and humane and self-respecting, has his whole heart in the welfare and good name of his regiment, and treats the men under his command like his younger brothers. The instance which I gave at the beginning of this chapter does not stand alone. And if we turn from Holy Orders and the Army to the other professions, we find exactly the same principle at work. 'Oxford House' at Bethnal Green set an example which has been widely followed. Both Universities, all the Public Schools, and most of the Colleges have now their 'Missions' and 'Settlements' in the poorest and most populous parts of London and

other great towns; and the whole of the social, educational, and athletic work which they do is done by young laymen in the leisure-hours of exacting professions. At one you may find the Prime Minister's son handing round hymn-books for a mission service. At another a young M.P. is conducting a Bible-class. At a third a Captain of Hussars is teaching the gutter-boys to box. Such institutions as Toynbee Hall and Mansfield House, though conducted on secular lines, display the same energy of youthful zeal directed to high ends; and I fancy that most of the great provincial towns could tell the same tale as Liverpool with its Newsboys' Home and Food and Betterment Association.

The Medical Profession has organizations of its own in which the younger doctors labour hard for the moral benefit of medical students. The young Barristers of the Temple and Lincoln's Inn run an 'Inns of Court Mission' of excellent quality. I know a community of young fellows, all in business, who live together under a simple rule of life which binds each member to give some of his leisure to the service of the poor and the Church. I know a suburban mission which is conducted exclusively by young men employed in great drapers' establishments; and again and again, as I go through the world, I stumble quite unexpectedly on smart young gentlemen whose

outward appearance suggests nothing but fashion and frivolity, but who really conduct Bible-classes and teach in night-schools, and manage boys' clubs and visit hospitals. The lay-readers of the dioceses of London and Rochester are mainly quite young men, busily engaged in shops or professions, who give their hard-earned leisure to Sunday work for the ignorant, the poor, and the depraved. The Church Army gathers its evangelists from the pit and the factory; the Society of the Sacred Mission appeals in particular to clerks; and both these classes of the community, so unlike in education and externals, produce year by year a band of youths who forswear all thoughts of profit and advancement and worldly advantage, and give themselves unreservedly to the lay-service of the Church. A few years ago there was a vulgar fashion, for which Thackeray and Leech were mainly responsible, of holding up clerks and servants to promiscuous and pointless ridicule. A truer conception of honourable service now obtains, and English footmen and grooms have given as good an account of themselves in South Africa as the sons of the houses which they served. Wherever I go I find the liveliest and brightest element in a well-worked parish is the element of the young clerks. They sing in the choir and serve the altar, and organize the athletics and run the clubs. They look after their muscles as well as their souls; and, as

a strapping curate who was lately an Oxford Blue vigorously expressed it, 'You simply can't make them funk if you tried.'

Now I do not for a moment suggest that this spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to high ends has as yet possessed all the young manhood of England. But I speak what I know when I say that it exists, that it spreads, and that it carries in itself the promise of a nobler citizenship and of a more genuine patriotism than those which we see to-day. 'We live in an age when to be young and to be indifferent can be no longer synonymous. We must prepare for the coming hour. The claims of the future are represented by suffering millions, and the Youth of a Nation are the Trustees of Posterity.'

XL

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

'THE Youth of a Nation are the Trustees of Posterity.' I rewrite this sentence from 'Sybil,' because it is an excellent text for the sermon on Public Schools and Universities which I had purposed to deliver; but when I come to close quarters with my subject I find that it will probably overflow the limits of a single chapter. I now, therefore, speak first of Public Schools, and leave the Universities for a later day.

And with regard to Public Schools, I may as well begin by saying quite plainly that I am no idolator of their unnatural restraints and scarcely more reasonable indulgences. 'Outraged Nature,' said Gibbon, 'will have her revenges;' and I know too much about the system to glorify it as an unmixed good. But, for all that, I recognize the fact that Public Schools have been, and are, and are likely to be, potent factors in the sum of our national life, and, as such, I have long made it my business to acquaint myself as closely as I can with their spirit and their working. Here, if anywhere

in our social system, I am persuaded that I see marked and tangible improvement. Thirty years ago, when I was myself a Harrow boy, I heard Dr. Benson, then Master of Wellington, preach a striking sermon on the influences by which God 'has drawn—is drawing—the Public Schools of England to Himself;' and although that language may be a little too exuberant, I believe that it testifies to a real and happy change. With the ecclesiastical influences which affect our schools I do not propose to deal. The undogmatic religion generally taught in school-pulpits seems to me rather dear at the price, when that price is the exclusion of laymen from head-masterships; and the spectacle of a middle-aged layman taking Holy Orders on purpose to qualify himself for a professional prize does not conduce to edification.

> Our Mother Church, with half-averted sight,
> Blush'd as she bless'd the grisly proselyte.

We will avert our sight, not half but wholly, and will consider our subject entirely apart from personalities.

'Public Schools are the very seats and nurseries of vice.' This is an extract from a religious journal which Dr. Arnold once made the text of a characteristic sermon. And, in spite of his energetic protest, I fancy that the judgment was not far astray. A great Head-Master of that period declared that it was his duty to teach Greek but not morality. A school had

nothing that corresponded to the proctorial supervision of a University. As long as propriety was not ostentatiously violated under the eye of authority, there was no enquiry into what went on out of sight. Drinking was not a vice, but an accomplishment. Bullying was a matter of course. The lowest forms of so-called sport were recognized amusements. All the conditions of school-life were of the roughest and hardest kind. Bishop Wilberforce, when he was Dean of Westminster, wrote to a friend: 'The school here is in a dreadful state, and very much, I feel sure, from the need of greater comforts, cleanliness, and attendance. If you treat boys as savages, they will be savages.' Dr. Vaughan, himself a Rugby boy, has recorded the prevalent tradition of his time, that 'Masters and boys were each other's natural enemies; that every shade of falsehood (lying scarcely, if scarcely, excepted) was excusable, was justifiable, in that one relation; that idleness was no sin, that breaches of rule, evasions of duty were no sin, in boyhood; that the preparation of body and mind and soul for a life's work might indefinitely be postponed without guilt; and that the utmost reasonable goal of a schoolboy's moral ambition was the avoidance of shameful scandalous vices such as would tarnish a family name and shock the world of the respectable.'

Now in all these respects the reformation is

complete. Discipline is strictly enforced. The utmost care is taken (though, it must be admitted, not always successfully) to guard against moral contamination. Physical cruelty is almost unknown. A high standard of honour is maintained, and refinement, delicacy, and comfort are constantly increasing. The great mass of schoolboys will never work very hard, but at any rate ignorance is thought more despicable than it was a few years ago. A smattering of general culture is fashionable with quite lazy boys, and is not unknown even among that race of athletes of whom Euripides thought so unfavourably. Boys are no longer as much ashamed of religion as they used to be. The Chapel-services at nearly every school are bright and animated. Good preachers find no more attentive hearers than the congregations of Eton and Harrow. I hear of a voluntary Bible-class among the boys at one Public School, and of a Guild on strictly ecclesiastical lines at another. The example of the young soldier whom I lately described might be cited as showing the leaven of righteousness which may be working where it is least suspected.

The Youth of a Nation, says my text, are the Trustees of Posterity. This is a lesson which the Public Schools are learning and teaching with commendable diligence. Time out of mind, Public School-boys were taught to form ambitious schemes

of military and political and literary success. They were reminded with painful frequency that Waterloo was won in the playing-fields of Eton; that Sir James Graham resolved to be an orator from the day when, as a Westminster boy, he listened to Pitt and Fox; that Canning and Gladstone were politicians while they were in jackets; and that Byron was writing poetry when his contemporaries were playing marbles. But of late years the Public Schools have awoke to a worthier conception of life and its possibilities. Success and fame and professional advancement are no longer treated as the be-all and end-all of rightly-directed manhood. The idea of Social Service has at length been recognized as the most honourable of all ambitions. Quite recently some disciples of the greatest philanthropist who adorned Queen Victoria's reign have affixed to the wall of John Lyon's old schoolroom a tablet which, under the pregnant motto of the Ashleys—'Love, Serve'—bears the following inscription:

NEAR THIS SPOT
ANTHONY ASHLEY
AFTERWARDS 7TH EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.
WHILE YET A BOY IN HARROW SCHOOL
SAW WITH SHAME AND INDIGNATION
THE PAUPER'S FUNERAL
WHICH HELPED TO AWAKEN HIS LIFELONG
DEVOTION TO THE SERVICE OF THE POOR
AND THE OPPRESSED.

It is within my own knowledge that those words have not been written in vain. They have already borne fruit in ethical and humanitarian effort; and a similar report comes to me from every Public School. A few years ago it was the fashion for schoolboys to insult, or at best to ignore, the working-people of the place in which the school was situate. They were 'Louts,' or 'Chaws,' or 'Cads,' or 'Scys,' according to the graceful terminology current at this or that seminary of polite learning. Here, again, is a notable and a happy change. Schoolboys have learnt the meaning of the Wykehamist's motto, 'Manners maketh man,' and have applied their new learning to their relations with labourers and artizans. This change is in great part due to those Missions or Settlements which nearly all the Public Schools support in the poor districts of great towns. The poor lads of the Mission district make excursions to the Public School which runs the Mission, and are warmly welcomed and generously entertained; and the boys of the Public School pay periodical visits to the Mission, and organize concerts, and play football with the local team, and hand the cake at the school-treat, and wait on the old ladies at the mothers' meeting. And so the odious barriers reared by purse-proud vulgarity and obsolete convention are gradually broken down, and boys of the governing class learn their first lessons of social service.

The subject might be indefinitely prolonged, and I can scarcely part from it without saying a word about the origin of the great and salutary change which I have described. For my own part, I have no special affection for the spirit of Rugby, and I am iconoclastic enough to think that there were imperfections even in the character and methods of Dr. Arnold. But beyond all question he started the movement which, slowly working its way through three generations, has turned every Public School in England into a training-place for Christian citizenship. In the only really good book about and for boys which ever was written, this aspect of Arnold's work is indicated with consummate skill. The news of Arnold's death reaches Tom Brown in the Isle of Skye, and he travels down post-haste to Rugby, only to find that the funeral is over and that his old master has been laid to rest beneath the altar of the School-Chapel. The young man kneels in his sorrow at the altar-grave: there we leave him when the story ends, and the author asks:

'Where better could we leave him, than at the altar before which he had first caught a glimpse of the glory of his birthright, and felt the drawing of the bond which links all living souls together in one brotherhood—at the grave of him who had opened his eyes to see that glory and softened his heart till it could feel that bond?'

XLI

THE UNIVERSITIES

THAT favourite child of Oxford—that fine flower of her culture and gentleness—Arthur Penrhyn Stanley once wrote thus of a brother ecclesiastic: 'He is active, learned, and liberal, but has some of the *savage qualities of the Cantabrigians*.' I trust that no trace of a similar bias or prepossession will make itself perceived in me, when I attempt to estimate the present bearing of the Universities upon our social and national life. I will strive to 'lay aside' (as the Prayer of the House of Commons says) 'all private interests, prejudices, and partial affections,' and will endeavour to regard the two Universities as a single force, determined by the same antecedents and modified by the same influences. To this end I take into account none of the characteristic differences between the two Universities. I do not contrast the idealism of the one with the thoroughness of the other. I say nothing of the 'Oxford Movement' or the 'Cambridge School,' nothing of the eager polemics which time out of mind have vexed the Isis, nor of the learned calm which

broods perennially over the Cam. After all, my present enquiry is concerned with the signs of social amelioration; and, socially speaking, I imagine that there is not much to choose between the histories of the two Universities. What they were like fifty years ago we learn, with farcical enrichments no doubt, but with substantial truth, from 'Tom Brown at Oxford' and 'Alton Locke;' 'Ravenshoe' and 'Julian Home;' 'Sketches of Cantabs,' and 'Verdant Green,' and 'Peter Priggins.' All these books, and others like them, combine to leave upon the reader's mind the same general impression—a certain amount of hard work, and a great deal of hard play, with a very considerable admixture of drunkenness, licentiousness, and profanity.

Of course there was always the countervailing tendency making for righteousness—the influence of 'the Movement' at Oxford, the tradition of 'the Sims' at Cambridge. But these more interior elements scarcely fall within the purview of the novelist who describes a University; and the general impression is that of riding and rowing, boxing and billiards, beer and milk-punch, varied by such innocent recreations as screwing-up a Don and thrashing a bargee on the Fifth of November. As in the Public Schools, so in the Universities, anything resembling sympathy with the People and their claims and their trials was practically unknown, and it is in

this respect that I see the most notable improvement. Where and when and with whom did it begin? In these historical enquiries it is always difficult to be just; but, as far as I know, the credit of the first impulse towards Social Service must be attributed to Edward Denison and Theodore Talbot. It was said of them by a friend that they were 'the Uhlans of a great advance' which has won whole provinces for the Christian cause. Both were Christ Church men. Both were well born, well connected, popular, and rich; both were heirs to great inheritances; both were spoilt and petted and indulged. The utmost exertion that circumstances required of either was to enjoy hunting and Society till he chose to take a Parliamentary seat which his family controlled, and then to settle down to a lifelong career of dignified and opulent indolence. Such seemed the appointed lot of each, but each rejected it and chose a higher destiny:

To his young soul diviner promptings came.

Edward Denison withdrew from the society of which he was a favourite ornament, and buried himself in the Mile End Road, where he lived alone in cheerless lodgings, working at sanitation, housing, poor-law, popular education, and sick-relief in the then unknown wilds of Stepney. Theodore Talbot, acting on a sudden call of conscience, renounced at a moment's

notice the luxuries and amusements of his home, and dedicated his life and fortune to the service of the poor of St. Alban's, Holborn, where he lived in workman's rooms, teaching the ignorant and feeding the hungry, nursing the sick, reclaiming the children from the gutter, and carrying the dead to burial.

Denison died of lung-disease and overwork in his thirtieth year. Talbot by an accident in his thirty-seventh. Nearly a generation has passed since they were laid in their graves, but their memory is still fragrant and their influence still operative. Between 1870 and 1880 there was a great stirring of the dry bones at the Universities. That brilliant but morbid and exaggerated book—'Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism'—roused undergraduates to the sense that the religion of the Cross, if it was not to be an absolute mockery and imposture, must impose upon its disciples some obligations to the poor, the suffering, and the down-trodden. The book supplied Dr. Pusey with the topic of a famous sermon on "Christianity without the Cross," preached before the University of Oxford in 1875. My copy of it lies before me as I write, and the solemnity of the great Doctor's appeal still seems, as it seemed at the moment of utterance, to anticipate the disclosures of the Final Judgment. 'Many of you, my sons, are provided with superfluities. You have not to stint yourselves as to

the pleasures of your age. Day by day, I suppose, passes with all conveniences of life or amusement, or some self-indulgences which, though not directly sinful, are rather injurious. If our Lord was to come now, in how many do you think that you could tell Him that you had fed Him, clothed Him, supplied Him when sick? Some, I fear, could not say that they had bestowed as much on Christ as upon their dogs.'

The warning was not thrown away. Many an undergraduate learned to follow the example of Denison and Talbot, and denied himself luxuries, and curtailed his leisure, and spent his evenings at night-schools and his Sundays in classes, and gave, not merely fragments and dregs of his superfluities, but what he really felt and missed, to the service of the poor. And in 1883 came another of those sudden awakenings which from time to time quicken the easy-going current of University life. 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London' found a deep and even passionate response in the hearts of men on whom life had showered all its best blessings. The Christian Social Union is the permanent expression of a zeal for the social rights of humanity which had its origin in that heart-searching time. The ark and sanctuary of the movement is the Oxford House in Bethnal Green, with its wide-spreading ramifications of connected institutions, and its example followed in every quarter of London by Colleges and Public

Schools. It was a splendid idea of Social Service to carry into the most squalid and dismal areas of great cities the faith and the culture, the social amenities and the physical discipline, which make the joy and the beauty of life at Oxford. Of that ideal the present Bishop of London was the indefatigable and irresistible apostle. The echoes of his breezy appeal still linger in many a memory. 'You are coming up to London to make your careers and follow your professions. Stick to them like men. I am not asking you all to be parsons. But put in a bit of spare time with us in the slums. Better still, come and live with us. It's jollier to dine on a leg of mutton with a dozen Oxford men at Oxford House than to munch a solitary chop in lodgings at Hampstead. Come and try.' And they came and tried, and found it true, and gave themselves and all that they were, had, or could do, to the social service of the East End.

One of the most cheering sights in England is the Whit-Monday excursion of the clubs in Bethnal Green to Oxford, where undergraduates vie with one another in the heartiness and splendour of their welcome; and the workers of the East End forget all social prejudices, and yield themselves with delightful self-abandonment to the influences of a place dedicated to friendship.

Cambridge did not lag behind. I recall the case of a jovial undergraduate who, after winning a point-to-

point race, was rusticated for riding his victorious horse round the Great Court of his college. After occupying his enforced leisure at a Cambridge Settlement in South London, he came back to plead its cause before a meeting of undergraduates, with the Vice-Chancellor in the chair and the Master of his college to move a vote of thanks to him. And the good tradition, once established, has never flagged. That truly noble book, 'The Heart of the Empire,' shows that Cambridge is as keenly alive as Oxford to the social needs of great cities and the problems of the coming hour. Young Fellows of Colleges surrender the luxuries of combination-rooms and the æsthetic delights of 'Backs' and 'Courts,' to live as artizans among artizans, trying day by day to widen the horizon and warm the hearts and cheer the life of the 'dim, common populations' among which they dwell.

'The Youth of a Nation are the Trustees of Posterity.' And when we see the social energies put out to-day by Oxford and Cambridge and contrast them with the selfishness, the exclusiveness, and the fatuous pride which disgraced the past, even the gloomiest pessimist must admit that England is moving in the right direction. The truest philosophers, after all, are those who in days of darkness and difficulty still dare to believe in the 'good time coming.'

XLII

WOMEN AND GOOD WORKS

I APPROACH the subject of this chapter not only with reverence but with awe. My eyes seek the ground and my knees quake, for I know that I am treading where a false step may be destruction. Once on a public platform I had the temerity to confess that I shared John Knox's dislike for the 'Monstrous Regiment of Women;' whereupon I received a letter from an indignant lady protesting that women were no more monstrous than men, nor, indeed nearly so much so; and that, for her part, she thought a female regiment would compare very favourably in point of looks with anything that the opposite sex could put in the field. My etymological explanation of the words 'Regiment' and 'Regimen'—their derivation and employment—was received with sarcastic incredulity; and from that time on a great awe has hallowed all my speeech when I approached the 'mysteries of Bona Dea.'

Thus chastened, I put on one side all the political

work of women and confine my observation to religious, social, and philanthropic fields. In these, unless I greatly mistake, we see some clear signs of national improvement.

Once I was staying with some friends in a country house, and attended on Sunday a typical village service. In a church of venerable age was assembled an entirely rural congregation—the Squire and his party, a few farmers, and all the rest agricultural labourers and their families. The Vicar preached from St. Mark viii. 36: 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' 'What,' asked the preacher, 'is "the whole world"?' And he answered his own question by saying that it meant different things for different people. For the Squire it meant his rents, in most cases sport, perhaps a seat in Parliament. For the farmer it meant good times, large profits on his industry, and a comfortable balance at the end of the year. For the labourer it meant sufficiency of food and warmth, regular work, fair wages, and a decent cottage. But to all alike the same question applied. What will your 'whole world' profit you if, in order to obtain it, you do what your conscience condemns as wrong, and 'lose your own soul' thereby? If the goodness of a sermon can be tested by the attention with which it is listened to, that sermon was super-

excellent. It was so simple in phrasing that the humblest could understand; so searching in thought that the wisest were forced to ponder. I praised it enthusiastically at luncheon, and then discovered, through the amused giggling of the sons and daughters, that 'Mamma had written it.' The lady who wrote that sermon was a social teacher of unusual power, and the knowledge which enabled her to write it had been acquired in the practical experience of Social Service. Her work, like that of most women similarly situated, had of necessity lain chiefly among the agricultural poor, and, as I have said before, it is in the rural districts of England that the sincerity and simplicity of life principally survive. But during the last few years the impulse of Social Service has laid hold upon the dwellers in towns; and many a smart London woman, whose appearance and surroundings would suggest nothing but self-indulgence, is really living a double life, of which at least one-half is dedicated to the service of the poor, the miserable, and the helpless. When I was writing about other and less commendable aspects of Society I described a famous character of the racing world whom I called 'Catherine, Countess of Ascot.' The lady whom I had in mind never missed a race-meeting or a garden-party, a banquet or a ball; and, wherever she went, her cheeriness and briskness and keenness for amusement

made her, though nearer eighty than seventy, the centre of life and fun. Yet once a week, or thereabouts, Lady Ascot, shrouded in a waterproof cloak and a thick blue veil, used to sally forth from her house in Mayfair, hail the Mile End omnibus, and descend upon her 'District,' where she distributed soup and sympathy, tracts and comforters, racing tips, and hints to mothers, with a quaintly indiscriminating but most genuine benevolence.

There is not a well-worked parish in London which is not supplied with an army of District Visitors, and the poorer parishes in the more distant quarters draw their supply from Grosvenor Square and South Kensington. Many a Belgravian matron gives one day a week to her mothers' meeting in Spitalfields or Bermondsey, and some of the prettiest and most popular damsels in London toil like galley-slaves at clubs and classes for factory-girls and shop-assistants and general servants. The 'Girls' Friendly Society' and the 'Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants' (called by its devotees the 'Mabys') were founded and are run by ladies for the sole benefit of girls and young women in domestic service. A girl from a pauper-school, suddenly transplanted to a gentleman's house, is often a rather difficult element in domestic economy, and admirable is the long-suffering patience which refined and educated women,

for mere love of the work, will lavish on the task of taming and guiding and civilizing these wayward handmaids.

A great proportion of the most active work for Temperance which is going on to-day is performed by women. One well-known lady has made Inebriate Homes her special care; another devotes all her energies to the regulation of Dangerous Trades. A committee of ladies, under the sanction of the Home Office, superintends the inmates of the Women's Prisons. Every hospital in London enjoys the services of a staff of lady-visitors, who read to the patients and sing in the wards, and organize entertainments, and befriend the convalescent after their discharge. Of course Preventive and Rescue Work is pre-eminently the province of women, and, all over London, there are agencies for reclamation under the guidance of Christian ladies. This particular department of women's work leads by a natural connexion of thought to Sisterhoods. There still survives in a quiet convent at Oxford the truly venerable lady who, in 1841, dedicated her life to God under the protection of the threefold vow—the first Anglican Sister of Mercy. The grain of mustard-seed which she planted has spread to a miraculous growth. The three great communities of Clewer, Wantage, and East Grinstead, devoted respectively to Reclamation, Education, and

Nursing, have now spread to every province of the British Empire and to the United States. Smaller communities of like aim abound, and the total membership of English Sisters of Mercy must now be reckoned in thousands.

Outside the conventual life, the same activities are stirring. The 'Grey Ladies' and the 'Brown Ladies' are associations of gentlewomen who, having no domestic ties, live together for just so long as it suits them, without renouncing their fortunes or their liberty, and carry on every kind of parochial, social, and educational work in the parishes to which they are attached. Then, again, nearly all the 'Settlements' run by Colleges or Public Schools have Women's Associations attached to them; and those who can be spared from home go down and take up their abode in the mission-district, and toil with a self-sacrificing energy which puts the brawniest curate to shame. The principal Girls' Schools of England club together to run a Mission of their own in South London, and the little band of ladies resident on the spot undertake the whole duty of 'serving tables,' and set the clergy free for their proper ministry. Some of the most popular teachers in Night-Schools at the East End are young ladies from the more fashionable quarters, and I know one lady who ten years ago started a Sunday Class for Working Boys, which still

flourishes though the boys have grown into men, and of which she is still the sole guide and ruler.

Not long ago I was calling one Sunday afternoon on a lady who lives near Knightsbridge Barracks, when presently a clinking of spurs on the staircase announced the approach of cavalry, and then twelve stalwart young troopers of the Life Guards came rolling in for tea, talk, music, and tobacco. Those who have read Archbishop Benson's Life will remember the remarkable class or group of fashionable women which developed out of some Lenten services in Lambeth Chapel, and remained till the Archbishop's death a standing witness for the Higher Life in that stratum of Society where worldliness and irreligion are supposed to be most dominant. Perhaps, after all, F. W. Faber, who after he became a Roman Catholic, ministered entirely in London and very largely to fashionable women, was not absolutely wrong when he wrote: 'The heroic things of Christian attainment are far more difficult in pleasant gardens and by quiet river-sides than in the ballroom or the Court. There is a poison in the even lapse of a merely comfortable life which is fatal to sanctity.'

A few years ago some young girls, belonging to the fashionable world and all friends of one another, chanced to be confirmed together at a West End church. One of them married the moment she came

out, and, as soon as she had settled down in her new home, her first thought was to gather a little band around her and establish a weekly Bible Class, with a view to perpetuating and practising in adult life and new surroundings the lessons of active goodness which they had learnt together in their preparation for Confirmation. Her husband, a jovial young man of the world, began by cracking jokes at his girl-wife's endeavour, and used to say to his friends: 'If you're coming to call on my Missis, don't choose Wednesday; for that's the day she has her Revival.' But, like the good fellow that he was, he was secretly proud of the moral courage and earnestness which 'the Revival' showed. And truly, if the young wives of the present hour begin their domestic life in this spirit of cheerful and practical religion, the citizens of the next generation may rise up and call them blessed.

XLIII

THE CHURCH

'ALL things are double,' says the Son of Sirach, 'one against the other.' Granting that both my general account of social deterioration and my special instances of improvement are true, what is the combined result? Is evil or good getting the upper hand? In two words, is the world growing worse or better?

For my own part, I believe that moral turpitude was seldom so widely spread, never so unblushing; and that not for fifty years has it commanded so many adherents in what is regarded as decent society. At the same time I believe that the forces of good, though utterly outnumbered, were never so active, so zealous, so enterprising as now. In other words, the wicked are now extraordinarily wicked, and the good extraordinarily good. That the good are fewer than the wicked is only another way of saying that they are the good. But it has happened before now that the hope of social salvation lay in a mere remnant, as men

judged it; and a very few righteous were able to save the guilty city.

And another element of hope in the national outlook is that so many of the good are young. 'It is a holy thing,' said Lord Beaconsfield, 'to see a nation saved by its youth;' and just now it is our young men and our young women who are keeping alive the soul of England and exercising those qualities which make a nation really great. Of senilé and anile vice, and middle-aged sordidness, and precocious cynicism we have seen more than enough in our survey of Society. The corrective is to be found in the sight of young officers working for their men, and Public-School boys banding themselves together to resist wrongdoing; and the Universities sending the pick of their athletes to curacies in the slums, and young barristers and young M.P.s sacrificing their leisure for social work; and young ladies forsaking their own amusements to give mill-hands and factory-girls a better time. These sights, and others like them, in spite of all the hideous phenomena around us, encourage a cheerful and a reasonable optimism.

But it is a favourite device of rhetoric to put one's most important point last and gradually lead up to it by an ascending scale; and on the same principle I have reserved till now the department of our

national life which, as I conceive, gives the strongest warrant for a hopeful view of the nation's future.

Sydney Smith, preaching on the occasion of Queen Victoria's accession, thus referred to the religious prospects of the dawning reign: 'I hope the Queen will love the National Church and protect it; but it must be impressed upon her mind that every sect of Christians have as perfect a right to the free exercise of their worship as the Church itself; that there must be no invasion of the privileges of other sects and no contemptuous disrespect of their feelings. . . . I have lived to see the immense improvements of the Church of England; all its power of persecution destroyed, its monopoly of civil offices expunged from the book of the law, and all its unjust and exclusive immunities levelled to the ground. The Church of England is now a rational object of love and admiration; it is perfectly compatible with civil freedom; it is an institution for worshipping God, and not a cover for gratifying secular insolence and ministering to secular ambition. It will be the duty of those to whom the sacred trust of instructing our youthful Queen is entrusted to lead her attention to these great improvements in our religious establishments, and to show her how possible and how wise it is to render the solid advantages of a National Church compatible with the civil rights of those who cannot assent to its doctrines.'

If, following the line of thought here indicated, we consider the Church of England in her external relations, we see that the legal and constitutional ascendency, which when Sydney Smith wrote was already impaired, has since undergone further and very important modifications. People are apt to speak of Disestablishment as a simple act, to be begun and finished by one stroke of the legislative pen. Quite different, as was well pointed out by Dr. Woodford, late Bishop of Ely, is the reality. 'The truth,' he said in 1881, 'rather is that Disestablishment has been proceeding during the last fifty years. The process began with the repeal of the Test Acts in 1828.' Since then have followed in natural sequence the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics; the legalization of marriages in Dissenting chapels; the withdrawal of matrimonial and testamentary jurisdiction from the Ecclesiastical Courts; the admission of Jews to Parliament; the abolition of Church Rates; the abolition of University Tests; the admission of Nonconformist funerals to the National churchyards. 'Beyond all doubt,' continued the Bishop, 'all were steps in the dissolution of the union between Church and State. And indeed it has been a most gracious Providence which has thus spread the process over half a century. Hereby the Church has been allowed time to quicken her spiritual energies and to strengthen the things that

remained and were ready to die. During this whole period she has been learning, under the Divine Hand, to stand alone.'

And, if we turn from the external relations of the Church to her internal economy, we see abundant proof that this loss of civil predominance has been accompanied by, if indeed it has not directly caused, an enormous development of spiritual strength and activity.

Mr. Gladstone used to be fond of quoting the testimony of the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville (1755–1846) that the transformation of the Church of England was the most wonderful phenomenon that his long life had seen. And yet Mr. Grenville died while the Church was still in a condition which, as compared with the present day, was a condition of lethargy as to performance and twilight as to learning. Cast in increasing measure on her own resources, the Church has displayed a fulness of life and a creative vigour which her most fervent disciples of sixty years ago could scarcely have conceived. She is alive in every limb and every fibre,

Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma.

So Cardinal Newman bitterly wrote of the mother who had nurtured him. The first part of the line is happily applicable to the existing fact, and the satire contained in the last three words has lost its sting. Sixty years

ago the Church was putting forth visible and tangible signs of a vigorous life stirring in her veins; and who that sees the rich and increasing fruitage of these later years can doubt that the crop springs by natural and normal process from the tree, or that the tree itself is indigenous to the national soil? On July 14, 1833, Keble preached in the University pulpit at Oxford his memorable sermon on 'National Apostasy.' 'I have ever considered and kept the day,' said Newman, 'as the start of the religious movement of 1833.' And by that movement, it is no exaggeration to say, the religious life of England has been transformed. Following, and to some extent growing out of, the Evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, and in its turn partly making way for and partly accompanying the Liberal reaction of forty years ago, the Catholic movement in the Church of England produced a spiritual revolution. To say that it has been attended by some errors, some extravagances, and even some disasters, is only to say that it was wrought by human agencies and mixed with the imperfection which mars all human achievement. Bishop Wilberforce aptly likened Ritualism, in its earlier phases, to 'some brilliant coruscation, cast forth from the surface of the weltering mass of molten metal, which, unaffected by such exhalations, flows on with its full stream into its appointed mould. Those burning sparks witness to the heat of the mass from which

they spring; they are not, in their peculiar action, of its essence or its end.' And again: 'A moderate and sober development of ceremonial belongs necessarily to the Church as a living body. Life implies, of necessity, change. Death alone secures immutability.' Life—energetic and almost boisterous life—is the characteristic of the Church to-day.

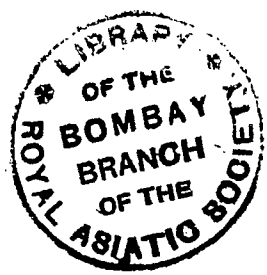
The general drift and sweep of the Catholic Revival has gradually assimilated every form and agency of good which the Church at large contained. It has sweetened bitterness and disarmed opposition, and (in spite of temporary ebullitions) has composed faction within the Church's own borders, and has established courteous and amicable relations with the great bodies of separated Christians. And the result stands to-day before the eyes of the nation and of Christendom. The Church's historic fabrics have been recovered from desecration and decay, and made outwardly worthy of their high purpose. In every great centre of population new churches have been built and beautified and endowed. A seemly and intelligent type of worship has superseded the monotony and indecorum of old days. The arts of music and architecture have been brought to a high perfection in their application to religious uses. At home the vast increase of human souls for which the Church must keep watch has rendered necessary the

creation of new Episcopates. Throughout a world-wide Empire the Church is carrying on her mission with a zeal worthy of Apostolic times. Hospitals, schools, orphanages, penitentiaries—all the appliances and means of spiritual and physical mercy—spring up in an abundance almost commensurate with the ever-growing need. An American clergyman and a Roman Catholic layman not long ago told the present writer the fact that most impressed them in the English Church, and in both cases it was the same; it was the number of laymen, fully occupied in secular avocations, who voluntarily and systematically spend their leisure in directly religious work for the Church to which they belong. Our keen interest in ecclesiastical concerns and our Anglo-Saxon instinct of self-government assert themselves in parochial, diocesan, and provincial gatherings, and in the annual Congresses of the whole Church. There is an extraordinary zeal and liberality in missionary enterprise. Our yearly contribution to the literature of Biblical criticism, of ecclesiastical history, of theology, and of homiletics, is eminently worthy of a Church which has always known how to combine liberal learning with loyalty to the Faith once for all delivered.

Whoever seriously contemplates these phenomena and compares them with the conditions which prevailed when Queen Victoria ascended the throne, must surely

confess that of all the signal events of her long reign the revival of the Church is the most marvellous; and, if he also happens to be a son of that Church, the sight must fill him with equal proportions of thankfulness and hope.

English society may be profoundly corrupt, and the State may have miserably failed to play its part in the moral leadership of the world. But the Church of England is still, 'in spite of inconsistencies and menacing troubles, the most glorious Church in Christendom.'



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